

# Questioning the Authority of the Past

The Ahl al-Qur'an Movements in the Punjab



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ALI USMAN QASMI

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Ali,  
Lahore

# 1

## Introduction

Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a noted scholar of religious sciences with a focus on the study of Islam, once anecdotally compared the dilemma of present-day Muslims with a driver looking for vacant space in a parking lot and confronted with a 'No Parking' sign. He stated that a diligent driver would strictly follow the sign and abstain from parking his vehicle illegally. A less diligent one, though giving full regard to the dictate of the sign, would still park his car but not without remorse. Those who believe that disregarding the sign would not be too gross a breach of conduct would park the car and hope to get away with it without any repercussions. There would also be those who would consider the sign itself to be dubious and a practical prank by those simply mocking outsiders to their neighbourhood. It can be inferred from Smith's analogy that he considers the sign to be signifying a normative standard of excellence enjoined upon the Muslims to which they are ideally required to adhere. There are some who follow it at all times and there are others who try to do so most of the time and in most aspects of their lives. There are others who do not regard it as incorrect but are more relaxed in following it diligently. Those who do regard the sign itself as dubious and inauthentic, or simply unnecessary, can be taken as a reference to those who do not believe in religion or are agnostic.

The last category, however, should have one more entry: there are some among the Muslims who are as staunch in their beliefs as may be, the diligent ones, with the difference that the former do not give regard to all the religious instructions simply because they have been there for a very long time or have been unreservedly accepted by others as authentic. They only submit to those which they consider 'truly genuine' and divinely ordained. This group of Muslims one can refer to as the *Ahl al-Quran* and it is with the study of their history and beliefs that the present study is concerned.

Ahl al-Quran (People of the Quran) refers to a disparate set of movements and ideologues starting from the nineteenth century onwards in South Asia associated with those who uphold the Quran as the only sacred text which fulfils man's need, a law in himself, the best guide and protector. Although vague, not in a literal sense but the one cited above from the writings of Smith) or non-Quranic material, especially in the form of Hadith along with classical Quranic exegesis and jurisprudential compendiums, is regarded by them to varying degrees as the epitome of confirming the importance of Quran as a primary source as a source of religious guidance, the upholding of Quran as the epitome of a moral code which are required by the Muslims in the observance of their religious duties. Or alternatively they could argue the importation of Quranic ideas and principles pushed and supported by an independent reasoning and critical of stagnation in religious thought and stagnate in its spirit, for a re-exploration of Islam in order to bring about continuity between Islam and the challenges of modernity. Such Quranic ideals and principles, broadly defined or understood by them as emphasizing equity, justice and rationality among others, are needed to determine the relevance of religious guidance on the pretext of Islamic compatibility with the modern world. The Ahl al-Quran supports the quest on both historical and ideologically to develop a latent discourse on Islamic reform aiming for a fresh interpretation of Quran, re-orientation of its hermeneutical, ethical and political dynamism in Islamic law.

The purpose of the present study is to locate within the historical context of British India and later independent Pakistan the origins of the various Ahl al-Quran movements starting in the late nineteenth century from re-writings of Sayyid Ahmad Khan among others and early twentieth century and the growth of their ideas as spread by various ideologies during different periods. It should be noted that Ahl al-Quran has been used as a generic term in the present study since the Ahl al-Quran refers to more of a religious movement rather than a group associated with a single banner or monolithic religious doctrine. No new data will be given for their origin nor will any individual be credited for establishing it single-handedly.<sup>7</sup>

This study is aimed at tracing significant and interesting current academic debates on the content and dynamism of various aspects of South Asian Islam while contributing to the study of the Ahl al-Quran movements a little better ignored in Western academic circles by looking at the Ahl al-Quran movements. The present study will focus on

specifically on the debates and contestations about religious reform in British India during the late nineteenth century theorising polemics among a range of various persuasions about the authority of the past in defining religious beliefs and practices, and the politics relating to the adoption of a particular interpretation of said by a power elite of Pakistan for the purposes of legitimating and consolidating state authority.

Central to this study is the significance of the Ahl al-Qur'an schools and movements in initiating a critical reassessment and questioning of texts—especially Hadith—previously regarded as sacred or held in veneration, insofar as they are believed to have served as sources of guidance and authority for Muslim beliefs and practices. It will be shown how Ahl al-Qur'an movements have carved out a distinct discursive space where new ideas about the Prophet and the authority of his words and actions could be discussed and its relevance vis-à-vis Quran as a binding source of religious guidance could be examined. In doing so, they initiated a moderate view approach to Islam and its sacred scripture that questions the relevance of the works of classical jurists, exegetes and traditionists and does not invoke the authority of the past. The study will also focus on the role played by various reformers, especially Mawlana Abul Kalam Azad (d. 1946), Khwaja Ahmad-ud Din Arifin (d. 1936) and by Ghulam Ahmad Parwez (d. 1985) in defining the theoretical groundings of the respective Ahl al-Qur'an movement and establishing their organisational structure, mainly in the Punjab.<sup>4</sup>

### 1.1. THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

After this brief preview of the Ahl al-Qur'an schools, the following pages will now give a comprehensive overview of the historiography in approaches to the study of the multiple strands of socio-religious reform movements by scholars of South Asian and Islamic studies. In addition, the chapter, a revised literature work for the critical evaluation of the Ahl al-Qur'an and other related themes highlighted above will be outlined.

Since the Hadith and various aspects of its study is a recurrent theme in the present work, this section begins with an overview of Hadith studies, its relevance to Islamic faith and the recent controversies surrounding its historicality. This is followed by an assessment of the academic writings on the socio-religious reform in South Asian Islam. It will highlight the information gaps that exist in the present corpus of literature—especially with regard to the Ahl al-Qur'an—and also some of

the conceptual problems which have progressively been addressed by various scholars over a period of time.

### 1.1.1. DISPUTATIONS REGARDING THE AUTHORITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF HADITH IN THE WESTERN ACADEMY

Hadith refers to the words and deeds transmitted on the authority of the Prophet which convey details about the actions he performed, approved, disapproved or condemned along with his utterances and sayings on various occasions in response to different situations. A complete Hadith consists of a text, *matn*, and information about its chain of transmission (*isnad*). In most previous texts, *isnad* is the list of names of those who relayed the other transmitted the information until it reached him who currently reports it.<sup>1</sup> The knowledge of Hadith (i.e. Ahadith) acquired through a scholarly community of its various related fields of learning is vital for an understanding of the different aspects of Muslim faith and its history. The vast corpus of Hadith literature does not only record in minute detail each and every aspect of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) public and private life, its moral, sharia, as he made to his followers and adherents alike, but is also considerably relevant for an interpretation of the Quran and its tradition regarding the principles of Islamic law and morality. Another key element in Hadith studies which is commonly taken to be synonymous with Hadith in its meaning and scope is that of *Sunnat*. While Hadith is the various aspects of the behaviour of the Prophet, *Sunnat* is the law or practice deduced from this narration. In other words, Hadith is the 'carrier' and 'vehicle' of the *Sunnat*.<sup>2</sup>

While the question of the Prophet's authority and authenticity of Hadith literature is a settled one for the proponents of Hadith, the *Ahl al-Quran* seek to reassess the notion of whether the Prophet had, in the first place, any authority outside that of the strict provisions of the Quran and whether Hadith or *Sunnat* are authentic means and reliable vehicle of its transmission for authoritatively defining the beliefs and determining the practices of the present-day Muslims. Hence, the *Ahl al-Quran* in different ways and to varying extents, challenge the relevance of Hadith as a source of guidance not just because they are sceptical of the historical reliability of prophet's recorded words and reported actions in the form of Hadith or *Sunnat* but also because they question the authority of the *Ulama* in the first place on the basis of which derivations relating to Islamic beliefs and practices are made.



The history of Hadith literature had become controversial before the Abi al-Qasim in the modern history of South Asian Islam raised this issue. I had started with the writings of such Orientalists as Gustav Weil, Alois Sprenger and William Muir in the late half of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> The first argument was that the *Ahadith* remained in obscurity for more than a couple of centuries following Prophet Muhammad's (sall) death before being finally recorded in a written format. What gave such testimony directness on the history of Hadith further impetus was the contributions of Ignaz Goldziher in which he had argued that the bulk of Hadith literature was the result of various social and political developments and conscious efforts of the community to respond to these developments in a manner congenial to the Islamic community.

The most significant contribution to Western criticism of the history of Hadith literature was made by Joseph Schacht in the middle of the twentieth century. Schacht's main concern dealt with the origin and development of law in Muslim areas—the evolution of Muslim *fiqh*—and the tracking of the gradual processes of selection and rejection which lead towards the evolution of a system of law that could be termed as Islamic insofar it was based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*.<sup>2</sup> Implicit contrary to the common view among Muslim scholars that the system of law prevailing in the Muslim world for a period spanning well over a century after the coming of Islam was not based on revealed sources.

What makes Schacht's thesis relevant to a conscious estimate of the history of Hadith is his hypothesis that *Sunnah* remained a vague and undifferentiated concept pertaining to cumulative sources of law just the Prophet but many other sources of reverence and standard as well. These included most importantly according to his track, precedents of law of the *spontaneous* schools based in various major cities of the Muslim empire. It was only with the influential second-third century Muslim jurist al-Shafi'i (d. 204 AH/820) that the *Sunnah* was regarded exclusively as the precedents of the Prophet. These were then taken over by the *Fourth Sunnites* or *traditionalists*. The pattern and closure of a *divine* law was not only in *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* but in the *scholarly* paradigm.

After *Shari'ah* had been a well-known term in writings of *Sunnite* jurists in the early stages and that scholars considered by a community of Hadith even if singularly reported to be considered as valid and liable for acceptance, it was no longer possible for the adherents of *ancient* law schools to base their doctrines of law on the authority of the *traditions* and actions of the Prophet's companions and predecessors scholars among

he Prophet could no longer said to be best reflected in the practice of the community but was required to give up its traditional meaning of any precedence in the favour of the Prophet's normative behaviour and idealized practice as validated by a written account and formalized with strong legal basis. This development in Muslim jurisprudence began about the eighth century, forced new legal law schools to invest the doctrines with the authority of the Prophet and to give up the use of his Companions' reports in the making of law. Hence the rulings and sayings of the pious saint, Companion and successive scholars identified with the ancient school, according to Schacht, had to be fabricated with fake *isnads*. This process of projecting the legal doctrines backward from the successors of the Prophet to his Companions and ultimately to the Prophet began during the first half of the second century of Islam and continued well into the third. In Schacht's words:

A great many traditions in the classical and other collections were put into circulation only after that is, some of the new fabrications of later generations in the Prophet or genuine or forged traditions of the second century, in opposition to genuine traditions from the Companions and the authorities, and to the living tradition of the ancient schools of law: the *isnads* show a tendency to go backwards and backwards again and together as they go, they arrive at the Prophet.

It is linking of doctrine with saying of the Prophet had to be done in order to guarantee the prevalence of one's own law over and against the competing ones while giving it a distinct and exclusive outlook to this process. It is this need for backward projection of the doctrine back to the days of the Prophet that, according to Schacht, led to the widespread fabrication of Hadith.

Since the publication of Schacht's work in 1953, the trend has been either to support or reject his thesis or at the most make slight adjustments to it in the wake of additional research material as it becomes available while accepting as valid bulk of the arguments put forward by him. Among most avowed supporters of Schacht's theory are John Wansborough, Marc Hinds, Michael Cook and Patricia Crone, who have carried his argument to the logical extreme of questioning the historical claims of Muhammad as a Prophet and the possibility of Quran being 'authored' at a later period than being generally claimed and believed. Some Muslim and Western scholars also have refuted Schacht's thesis. They include J. M. G. Le Clez, Muhammad F. al-Azhar, Mustafa al-Azami, M. Z. Siddiqi, Elia Szeigman<sup>1</sup> and Nabila Abbott.<sup>2</sup> The third group of

scholars can be further divided into two categories. The first group of them agree with Schacht's view regarding the spuriousness of traditions as they are found in the present-day written collections. But they do not accept the claim that there were no traditions in circulation for such a long period. Scholars with this point of view include Noel Coulson, John Burton, David S. Powers, and C. H. A. J. L. van den Berg. The other category of these scholars have their differences with regard to methodology of using the traditions to determine the extent and possibility of its fabrication. They include Harold Motzki, Joseph van Ess, and Gregor Schoeler.<sup>2</sup>

### 1.1.2. STUDIES ON MODERN SOUTH ASIAN ISLAM

Another of earlier and recent studies on modern South Asian Islam have helped broaden our understanding of the dynamics of Muslim politics and discourses on reform of Islamic traditions and the Islamic loss of political power in 15th and the subsequent ascendancy of British authority in South Asia. In this regard pioneering work was done by Aziz Ahmad whose book continues to be quoted in every major study on modern South Asian Islam. It would be true to say that Aziz Ahmad laid down the initial framework for analysing this turbulent phase in the history of South Asian Islam. Although Ahmad dealt with every major Muslim movement and their leaders, it was left for successive generations of Western and South Asian scholars to expand on various themes explored in his book and give detailed account of important religious groups. In the subsequent decades a number of studies were carried out dealing with the Deobandi, Ahle Sunnat, and Ahle-Hadith movements. Some of the important religious seminaries were also studied at length, especially Nadwa and Darul Uloom. Among 'heretical' groups, the Ahmadiyya movement, unanimously censured by all the Ahl al-Sunnat and Shi'as as being outside the pale of Islam, has received considerable attention.

While the literature on South Asian Islam is rich in information about these religious trends and movements considered politically relevant, there exists hardly any detailed work on the *Ahl al-Quran* in Western academia. The sole exception is the work of David W. Brown which is the only study in modern Western literature on Islam that comes close to dealing with the *Ahl al-Quran*. Yet, his study too is rather sketchy since the author has relied mostly on secondary literature. For the literature produced by the proponents themselves is hard to access. This has resulted in some

as a fallacious and unopposed representation of the views of important Ahl al-Quran figures.

The leading scholars of South Asian Islam have also given negligible attention to the Ahl al-Quran and have erred in analysing their religious doctrines. Aziz Ahmad has described them as a fundamentalist splinter group of Ahl al-Hadith while Francis Robinson has referred to them as puritanical. Barbara Metcalf attributes the origin of Ahl al-Quran to a bit of internal dispute among the Ahl al-Hadith and goes on to take into reckoning the context of British imperialism and a sixteenth-century Punjab in which these movements emerged. The main flaw of these explanations is the linking of the Ahl al-Quran with the Ahl al-Hadith. Brown has described the Ahl al-Quran as an extension of the Ahl al-Hadith, in this presumption he is guided by the fact that Maulwi Abdu'l-Ghaffar Kawni, Ahmad Ali Durrani and Asim Jivraj are important figures related to Ahl al-Quran movements – share an Ahl al-Hadith ancestry in different events. Asadullah Khan was a professed Ahl al-Hadith follower for a long time and played a crucial role at its onset and major figures of Lahore named after him as Wali Masud Ahmad and Usman Ali Khan, both of Ahl al-Quran, were important Ahl al-Hadith figures of the same area and had a strong influence on scholars. Asim Jivraj, a prominent scholar of Ahl al-Quran, was a known Ahl al-Hadith scholar in the service of Shoghi Effendi and Navab Siddiq Hasan Khan.

Four these details about the background, roots, and legacy of Ahl al-Quran ideologues, Metcalf and Brown have erroneously inferred that Ahl al-Quran is a copy of the scripturalist or fundamentalist ideological approach adopted by the Ahl al-Hadith. In the light of the research framework that will be outlined for the present study, I will be showing that such a description of Ahl al-Quran ideologues does not stand flawed insofar as it overemphasises the religious background of the ideologues without probing into their actual writings and practising such categories as 'scripturalist' Islam.

This lack of careful scholarly attention given to the Ahl al-Quran may well be attributed to the fact that the relative religious influence of their ideas have been estimated as confined to a rather limited section of the population. It is generally been presumed that the Ahl al-Quran never reached a level of influence where they could be regarded as potentially a rival or capable of disturbing the established literary practices and ideologies of the overwhelming majority of South Asian Muslims. The present study would help revise such assessments about the ideological

underpinnings, its social contexts and the diverse strengths of the various Abi al-Qur'an movements.

### 1.1.3. THEORETICAL DEBATES ABOUT SOUTH ASIAN ISLAM

The historiographical trends concerning the history of South Asian Islam and Muslims have invariably been shaped by various academic theories and political considerations. In analyzing these recent theoretical debates, an attempt has been made to contextualize their ideas from a historical perspective.

Scholarship in Islamic studies have for a long period of time perceived Islam as an essentialized category. Among these scholars may be included Muslim academics as well as those trained in traditional Islamic studies. The underlying presumption has been that Islam can be understood by studying its sacred texts like the Qur'an, from which the laws, practices, ethics and moral code are derived and the social behaviour of all the Muslims, regardless of their cultural milieu and historical experiences, determined. This essentialist Islamic world-view has treated a community as being responsible for the erroneous presumption that the Muslim community is remarkably homogeneous.

One notable exception in this regard is Mohammad Mujeeb's work on the Indian Muslims published in the 1950s. He took note of the diversities of Muslim communities in South Asia and argued that his diversity only served to exalt the idea of unity. He cautioned against confusing the identity of the Indian Muslims as believers in Islam with their identity as a distinct body politic as a nation which they never were and never wanted to be.<sup>1</sup> Mujeeb did not elaborate upon a theoretical framework for the study of the plurality of religious traditions of South Asian Muslims.

In the 1970s, the question of the plurality of religious traditions in Islam came to dominate the intellectual debate. The sociological and anthropological exploration of South Asian Islam carried out in a special volume of *Contributions to Indian Sociology* in 1972, edited exclusively by the Muslims, critics of South Asian Islam, the *Islamic Studies* have led to a new approach of critical inquiry in this field. Imtiaz Ahmad, a sociologist by training based at the Jamia Millia Delhi, published a series of volumes on the rituals and religious practices of various Muslim groups in the years that followed. His main argument was that the study of South Asian Islam and Muslim communities had long been considered the domain of historians, Islamicists, academics working on Islam, and

Orientation was had, it is so plain bias occupied themselves with studying textual sources and getting their opinions thereof. It was on the basis of these textual sources that the Muslims regarded Islam as a closed system of well-defined beliefs and practices and Muslims as a monolithic community which exhibited no remarkable heterogeneity of outlook and shared a considerable amount of religious and doctrinal values. Ahmad accused such scholars of basing their opinions on a piecemeal and dualistic ideology derived from the two sacred texts which Muslims were in follow of, a form of "orthodox studies." Islamic humanists had been claiming that Islam could be described in terms of "a socio-cultural, ecological and philosophical complex and in its integrating social system, and its socio-cultural was restricted to the aspects of the religious system." He focuses on "the faces

Ahmad identified two serious limitations of such a concept of Islam and the Muslim communities. First, it ignores the "material problems" of Islam with the concrete beliefs and practices of Muslims. The growing gap between the two can "not be understood without inhibiting concept or notion of the religious and based system made by the humanists. Second, "one emphasises specific Muslim groups and groups which adhere to scriptural Islam, to the exclusion of a number of other local Muslim traditions."

In order to retrieve these local traditions, beliefs and practices and a tentative synthesis, he points out the need for the study of South Asian Islam, designed to an alleged "monolithic conceptualisation of Islam" by historians and humanists. Initially Ahmad took recourse to the scientific disciplines of sociology and anthropology. Ahmad's contention was that humanists and humanists saw Islam derived from written sources as a world religion, emerging from common uniform patterns. Sociologists and anthropologists could "interact and learn with an open mind and a dynamic spirit shaping the course of its destiny in response to peculiar local demands and temporal settings" on its own "evolutionary" of South Asia. Islam, Ahmad argued, is a hierarchical gradation of Islamic in South Asia and "served the need of a community in two ways. According to Ahmad:

The first level of South Asian Islam comprises of the beliefs and values that are shared by a few but as a religious authority, it is derived from the scriptures. This level included the "scriptural texts" as a source to sacred texts. However these beliefs and values are eventually gradually eroded. Muslim faith is not free from evolution and it can be assumed to a "developmental" level of South Asian Islam includes beliefs

and value of a more limited spread. They are not derived from the Islamic literature and it is not necessary that they must always agree with the beliefs and values of orthodox Islam. Sometimes they may even be opposed and contradictory. For example, however, we are regarded by the Muslims who did harm as 'pious' and the Hindu as a South Asian Islam comprises of beliefs and behaviours, determined by social environment gives as pragmatic in the sense that a large number of them still apply to the Muslims as well as non-Muslims. Besides the 'new' Islamic presentation of Muslim values, it is obviously a lesser degree of the Islamic presentation, or at least the persons as the possession of elements. Most of the elements of South Asian Islam are at the lowest level and are not regarded by Muslims. The three levels identified above are made by wide and narrow presentation, the degree of the degree of beliefs and behaviours characterised as South Asian Islam. It is perhaps the simultaneous presence of these three different levels of Islam in the South Asian Islam is more rigid and elastic<sup>41</sup>

This dichotomy and polarisation of religious beliefs was defined by Ahmad and other scholars along the binaries of Orthodox Islamism or Scriptural Normative and Populist Folk or 'mass' customary Islam. Others ascribed different dichotomies to the South Asian difference, such as between a 'Rustic Tradition' which (on the basis of its appeal and popularity among common, illiterate masses) was characterised primarily as the folk culture or 'rustic tradition'. Contrasting or complementing this Rustic Tradition is a more sophisticated intellectual facet of Islamic civilisation that developed in urban areas under the cultural influence of the important Muslim cities. However, in Central Asian origin, the Azhar Anwar Aun exactly is marked in the context of Muslim presence in European multicultural societies, there is a bipolar totalling and homogenising sense of 'Islamic' state of 'compatibility' to a multiplicity and non-dichotomous character of Islamic Islam, which promotes the prospect of social and political integration into society.

While the merits of such a demarcation of levels of South Asian Islam were disputed by other scholars to which we will come shortly, nevertheless, helped to expose the static and fatalistic inhibitory framework, which was inadequately equipped to take note of an 'typical' Muslim groups and their beliefs and practices and to address them in an academically rigorous way. Asim Raza has effectively summed up the limitation of the traditional prevalent approach among such academics in these words:

The most common problem for them – Historians and Muslims – has been to measure up all popular customs of the religion against the norms, practices and injunctions of spiritual Islam, and each ever getting the facts to measure up into the dark and be useless proof of folk Islam. The sheer convenience of resorting to this ill-defined and amorphous intellectual dumping ground of folk Islam lies at the roots of an endemic attitude – the part of Hearn and Ahmad's work is critical and convincing – critical indeed to probe this phenomenon.<sup>46</sup>

Ry then goes on to give examples from the works of certain notable scholars working in this field. For Muhammad Mukhi, the practitioners of popular Islam were "partly converted" for Peter Lady "Leaves Me alone" and for Francis Robinson "Half-Islamized peoples". At the "popular level" according to Aziz Ahmad "Indian Islam represents a mosaic of demonic, superstitious and syncretistic beliefs".<sup>47</sup>

Ahmad's work generated response from Francis Robinson. Writing from Historian and Islamicist's perspective Robinson built Ahmad's gradations too tightly compartmentalized to allow for any dynamic situation in which the possibility of a high Islamic tradition eating into local customs, customs, traditions and vice versa could be conceived. For Ahmad, the only fact of their existence is in complementation to each other as an integral part of a common religious system. Robinson, on the other hand, argued that Islam offers a pattern of perfection that can "show in every aspect of human activity as these then in the scriptures and gathered together in the form of Sharia. The existence of four different legal schools in Sunni Islam alone and the prevalence of non-Islamic practices acquiring the force of law among the Muslims does not preclude Robinson from asserting that the spirit of dynamism in Islamic religious tradition is towards the realization of a pattern of perfection in his view.

Ahmad's critics, therefore, offers abundant evidence that there is a vital relationship between Muslim societies and the pattern of perfection transmitted and exemplified by learned and holy men. Muslim societies – and not over the past centuries – Muslim societies have moved towards a greater realization of that pattern of perfection.

Robinson is correct in asserting that the idea of a permanent state of equilibrium between scriptural law and customary practice is fundamentally unhistorical and that there is bound to be movement – one way or the other – between values of perfect Muslim life and those which



ordinary Muslims read.<sup>18</sup> The problem with Robinson and Ahmad's hypotheses is that they don't agree on principle on the existence of a normative or orthodox Islam constructing a pattern of perfection which seems to be an unchanging essence. In doing that both have erred in estimating the dynamism and variety of the scriptural sources themselves and the continuous process of interpretation to which they have been put over the course of centuries.

## 1.2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

On the basis of the historiographical survey and critique of Western academy's works on South Asian Islam – and especially the Ahl al-Qur'an movement – it can be argued that there is a lack of requisite information and research framework for an academically fruitful inquiry of the Ahl al-Qur'an movements. In the following pages critical insights will be offered in order to develop a research framework for a study which not only enriches the existing corpus on South Asian Islam by providing factual information, hitherto unavailable, about the Ahl al-Qur'an movements but also suggests certain theoretical correctives. This will help explore the plurality of religious traditions within South Asian Islam, deconstruct the inhibitory notion of a monolithic Islamic tradition and help fill the information gap about the Ahl al-Qur'an movements.

### 1.2.1. ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Begin with a critique of Ahmad-Robinson debate, this study argues that instead of referring to such heuristic labels as Orthodox or Heterodox Islam, a more appropriate term of Islamic religious traditions is to be used. It is because such a term allows the incorporation of plurality of visions and academically diverse approaches to the study and understanding of Islam. Within the repertoire of Islamic religious traditions one can include such scriptural sources as the Quran, Hadith collections, and jurisprudential compendiums along with a wide range of other sources including historical chronicles, biographies of the Prophet, his Companions, and saints, along with hymns, travel memoirs, and more. As Richard Bacon has noted, the significance attached to them by their adherents or believers is not entirely due to their perceived intrinsically divine origins or sacredness but because these sources are discursively created, i.e. they are traceable in written form, genres that have sufficient historical depth and credibility to lend them the weight of authority and

relate them in some way to the Quran or the Traditions of the Prophet. Thus, Islamic religious traditions, including those which are scripture based – which primarily means the Quran and the Hadith – are not only diverse but also so historically constituted and, hence, always subject to contestation and redefinition. So there does not exist a normative basis or a normative or uniform pattern of excellence and a static Islamic orthodoxy. At the most, then, Orthodox Islam can be described in Clifford Geertz's words as an 'Islam which strives to be orthodox'.

In the light of such an understanding of the Islamic religious traditions the present study offers a differentiated re-orientation of these traditions and a more critical reading of the textual sources that have an impact on their making. It offers alternative perspectives on and revised view of the history of South Asian Muslims by emphasizing the multiplicity of religious traditions in Islam by taking into cognizance historical context and variegation of its forms.

## 1.2.2 REIFICATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND ISNAH PARADIGM

Also, against the backdrop of inadequacies of a term like 'scripturalism' it has been argued that 'those traditions as scripturalists should also have to be understood as spurious, fabricated, or even within the larger discursive space of Islamic religious traditions. The theoretical underpinnings of those adhering to reified Islamic traditions are not dissimilar from the classicist's construct of Islamic essentialism. Their conception of Islam as a closed religious system with clearly defined dogmas and practices encapsulated in the works of the scholars of Islam that blossomed in the centuries ago, largely written hundreds of years ago with there being hardly any need or room for further improvement, addition or revision.'

As already pointed out, there is no denying the existence of such traditions in the Muslim history or the attempt to enforce them as a normative practice or standard set of beliefs. What needs to be emphasized is that these reified Islamic traditions, as they were historically constituted in the nineteenth century, in comparison to any other period in the history of Muslims were limited to certain groups who enforced (or at least tried to enforce) strict rigidity among their followers claimed inspiration from the works of influential eighteenth century Muslim scholars and exhibited a considerable difference of opinion and approach among themselves, the Ulama of Dehband, Ahl-e-Hadith and Barelwi schools, major theological schools of Sunni persuasion originating

characteristically contrary to a but of strong ideological descent from such scholars as Abū Wāḥid. When to varying degrees privileged aspects of the verified Islamic tradition or one actual source were others in their understanding of it. This is clarified by the emergence and subsequent crystallization of doctrinal creeds and practices of these Sunni groups. In this way the concept of the 'true' Islamic tradition, in comparison to the Islamists' concept of a timeless and 'authentic' orthodoxy,<sup>1</sup> takes into account the historicity of these traditions, their diverse nature, multiplicity of forms and the limits of their influence.

The most important doctrinal aspect of the practitioners of revised Islamic tradition, as highlighted in the present study, is their recognition of the triplicitate sense of connectedness described by W. Lam Graham as 'Isnad Paradigm' which links the believers with the Quran and the glorified age of the Prophet in which it was revealed and implemented to perfection. According to him, this paradigm is derived from the central Islamic religious authority of Hadith which has been based upon the use of the Isnad or supporting chain that accompanies the *matn*, 'text' of every individual. Hadith Isnad being elements of the 'Isnad paradigm' enumerated by Graham are:

1. 'devotion of authority primarily to even the earliest and oldest transmission to a certain authentic tradition of the tradition' (p. 10);  
 2. 'a chain of textual transmission that is a linear link which represents an increasing generational distance from the original source, who is the Prophet or one of his companions and that of the last reporter. This is why the Isnad is the mechanism or device for the authentication of a text; the personal connection was seen as the 'golden chain of sincere Muslims' that guarantees the faithful copying, memorizing, reciting, and understanding of texts—not only those of the Hadith, but those of the Quran and all subsequent works of Muslim piety and learning.'<sup>2</sup>

It can be inferred from Graham's theorization that the authority of a text in traditional Islamic epistemology of the pre-print era has been dependent on the textual accuracy and authorship of the text as well as on the record of its dissemination. In the latter, however, oral rendition and repeated consumption was considered more credible in maintaining a reliable constancy of meaning as compared to the written text which was seen as having a greater prospect of being misinterpreted. As Brookley Messick has theorized:



an epistemological as well as epideictic—in the present context, religious—framework supporting the claims—the problematic, the rules of reference in which—rules and the validation of its claims as historical possibilities and moral—ethical goals is just fixation of its principles.<sup>47</sup>

The Isnad paradigm is a referential against which the reified Islamic authorities and the various reformist currents in Islamic religion can be contrasted for an academic enquiry. In order to arrive this point, reified Islamic religious traditions based on the Isnad paradigm will be juxtaposed against the Ahl al-Quran movements which sought to sever this link with the past by calling upon the Muslims to rely on the Quran alone for the derivation of their religious beliefs and practices.

### 1.2.3 AHL AL-QURAN AND THE QUESTIONING OF THE AUTHORITY OF THE PAST

The reformist current in Islamic discourse, Islamic religious traditions of which are Ahl al-Quran movements are a major contributor and the focus of present study questions the edifice of a technicalist structure deriving its strength from the authority of the past. It finds fault with such an order which in the interpretation of its proponents, stifles room for independent reasoning or fresh inquiry in Islamic scholarship or jurisprudential or legal matters waded continuing with centuries old interpretations of Islamic doctrines and discourses that are singularly in congruent with the dictates of modern times, rational enlightened spirit and scientific developments.<sup>48</sup>

While foregrounding such socio-cultural and religious-political considerations, the Ahl al-Quran rectify the supposed aberration in the reified Islamic traditions by foregrounding a new space supportive of ideas of religious dynamism, independent reasoning, scientific rational spirit and a fresh interpretation of Islamic doctrines and scriptures. They try to accomplish this by questioning the validity of the edifice of Isnad paradigm and its continuing referential and reverential values. While contemporary Muslim groups and movements asserted a new culturing an authority and normative-performative modes of action firmly embedded in the Isnad paradigm, the Ahl al-Quran as Islam is made out of elision of such storied precedence and connectivity. They denounce—or at least critically question—the relevance or historicity of Hadith—question the findings of former exegetes and jurists—and lay emphasis on the Quran as the only authentic and true scripture worthy of providing guidance for Muslims and essential to projecting a universal vision of Islam that

considered as embracing an ideal past. In doing this, they seek to question the relevance of the usual paradigm. Ahl al-Quran resort to a different reading of the Qur'anic text, examination of Prophets' authority, historicity of Hadith sources and validity of juristic texts, compendiums. The result is a mode of thought, reaching towards the reality of past, derived from an addition to an independent belief on their part in the norm for their enquiry envisaged by Islam. It is an alternative mode of an ideal or idealized past. The idealized past dates back to the days of the Prophet and the immediate decades following his death when the Qur'an came as imagined by the Ahl al-Quran, determined the course of action in Muslim polity and religious society. Thus, the past active prophetic revelation period as narrated by the Ahl al-Quran is superseded by certain and other such independent norms of philosophy, methodology and epistemological premises of the true spirit of Islam. In this way, the Ahl al-Quran scholars seek to restore to the Qur'an the primacy of Islam which was a radical change after the reign of pious caliphs resulting in the creeping of the rational and egalitarian spirit of Islam.

Thus, a new paradigm was developed in the emerging post-apostolic era which created a new paradigm in Muslim society. Regarding the scholars about the doctrinal basis and historical origins of the Ahl al-Quran movements. While this is important with respect to history of Ahl al-Quran movements is that within the ambit of this research framework, it becomes clear that the Qur'an comes as primary of the Ahl al-Quran movements. It can be described as well as said as some scholars have done, it is because of the Qur'an and Hadith only approach of scripturalists such as Abu Hanifa, the Ahl al-Quran in a regard of the usual paradigm – resort to a fresh interpretation of the Qur'an, understanding of the overall basis of Muslim society's legal, jurisprudential competence. Such an achievement is made by the Ahl al-Quran as not necessarily accept the authority of the Prophet as the sole authority on the meaning of the Qur'an since they question the Prophet's authority or susp of the historicity of his recorded words about such affairs. Also, they do not seek legitimacy from the scholars of centuries endowed with esteemed authority on the account of their well-earned professional reputation. With such an approach, the Ahl al-Quran open up Islamic religious tradition for revision, reform and contestation and not to their refutation. It is well further known while discussing the religious ideas of various Ahl al-Quran scholars in different chapters of the present study.

### 1.2.4. THE TERM AHL AL-QUR'AN

In the present study, the term 'Ahl al-Qur'an' has been used as a generic term denoting all those movements inspired by various individuals based mainly on the abiding the wealth of the new-found understanding. It references contradictory approaches in their respective traditions and a work on the part of some among them is being called a deviation since who have challenged the fixed paradigm and life view. It includes within its compass a range of religious opinions based on a variety of 'ecological' presuppositions leading to different sets of interpretations in response to the pre-sociopolitical and economic factors and ideological currents.

Therefore in the present study Ahl al-Qur'an is primarily a reference to a peculiar intellectual leaning in the ongoing discourse on Islam, of one which evokes the continuous prophetic authority, scriptural texts and the authority of his re-interpretations and possibly seeks revisions of the established relative statuses of Quran and Hadith as a source of law and their respective capacities of guiding Muslims in matters of belief and practice. This has emphasized that the Ahl al-Qur'an is not a term for an agreed upon and unestablished unisectarian line under a centralized authority or organization. But while admitting that there exists a variety of views on Quran and its Properties and other sources of authority from the part those described in this study as Ahl al-Qur'an groups and individuals still share the same discursive space in that they are working the imposing edifice of the fixed paradigm, hence, the use of this appellation is warranted by descriptive similarity of among the groups and individuals of diverse views. The term is not intended to be a taxonomic convenience. This also explains why this term has been used by various individuals and organizations despite the fact that they themselves are opposed to this designation as Ahl al-Qur'an. Another reason for adopting the term Ahl al-Qur'an is that the past word connotes the Munkar al-Haqq (Deniers of Haqq) who has draws on Farwaan which derived from the names of two among Ahl al-Qur'an ideologues, Abdullah Chakrabarti and Muhammad Ahmad Farwaan respectively. These terms have assumed a rather negative connotation and do not serve the purpose of forming a modern acronym of the two social, cultural and theological movements of these movements.<sup>60</sup> However, it should be noted that the term Ahl al-Qur'an does not refer the groups as the true adherents of the Quran and expounders of its teachings, as its meaning might suggest.<sup>61</sup>

### 1.3 SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THE PRESENT STUDY

The dearth of academic writings on *Ahl al-Qur'an*, as already pointed out, is largely because of the problem with accessing the written works of important *Ahl al-Qur'an* scholars and the journals published by their respective organizations. As a result, a special effort was made to retrieve such sources because it was supposed that these movements were insignificant as they had gained momentum without leaving a trace. Such an approach undermines the fact that in developing the discourse on the contestations of fresh ideas about the *Ulama*, the Prophet, and the *Qur'an*, the *Ahl al-Qur'an* wrote valued *Qur'anic* commentaries, histories of *Ulama*, the biography of the Prophet and polemical tracts. The opposition too, responded with writings on these subjects. This vast corpus of hitherto unexplored primary sources, in total, retrieved, now serves as public and private library, has served as the source material for the present study. On the basis of the critical evaluation of the source material, the present study argues that a historical place to the origin of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* movement and a comprehensive understanding of the movement requires certain key elements and aspects of its discourse and its impact in South Asia.

Other than the written sources of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* scholars and the opposition, oral source material has been used. But except for Chapter 10, the oral source material has not been used to its full degree to the extent that it has been used in other research on the *Ahl al-Qur'an* in its discourses. This is probably because the ideas of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* did not directly challenge the authority of the *Ulama* and did not become a polemical position almost immediately in the point of creating a new community and sectarianship. In a discourse text, it is a normative task as a community for the purposes of the maintenance of the textual archive as an instrument for the politics of control and dominance rather than on the significance of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* movements.<sup>65</sup>

The variation of available sources and their contents help in substantiating the argument that the *Ahl al-Qur'an* does not denote an undifferentiated world of *Ulama* organized under the banner of a single organization or a common set of beliefs. The textual analysis of these writings in the light of the theoretical formulations and downplays a comprehensive view about the historical origin, religious views and the influence of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* movement. Other than its purely historical context, the present study, by making a direct recourse to the works of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* scholars, deals with the theoretical debate on



which many of these movements were premised in order to offer a better understanding of their religious exposition. On the basis of these rhetorical differences, it has been shown that the individual movements and their ideologues addressed concerns relating to the centrality of the Quran, validity of the Prophet's authority and that of other authorities from the past in considerable variance to each other. The counter polemics in ideological terms, by the critics of the Ahl al-Quran, have been so presented as to delineate the plurality of opinions among the opposing Umma themselves with regard to the discourse developed by the Ahl al-Quran. Such treatment of the available literature makes it possible to give credence to the stated hypothesis of varying Islamic traditions even among those espousing a 'refined' version of Islam. In this way the twin purposes of providing information about the Ahl al-Quran and adding new theoretical aspects to the discourse on South Asian Islam have been served.

For the research goal related to gauging the influence of the Ahl al-Quran movements or ideas on the discourse of Islam in South Asia, certain indicators have to be identified. The first among these indicators is the potential of these movements or individuals to generate a controversy involving public attention, critical backlash and possible intervention by, or removal of, colonial authorities. It has been done in Chapter 4 where Ghazi Mehmud Dharampuri's act of apostasy, declaration of *fatwa* *kufr* (religious decree of heresy) against Maulwī Abū Ḥabīb Ḥakralawī and the struggle for vacating the Ahl al-Quran mosque serve as examples for the potential of these movements and individuals to generate controversy. The second important indicator is concerned with revealing the change in the religious ideas of the intended clientele of the Ahl al-Quran. They include the college graduates and others with a non-specialized training in Islamic sciences. The religious worldview of such Muslims underwent considerable change under the influence of the Ahl al-Quran writings and the discourse of Islamic modernism. The details of this influence have been explored in Chapters 5 and 6. In these chapters the third indicator, concomitant with the preceding one, takes into consideration the ideological shifts among the claims of refined tradition so prevalent, the alienation of Muslim subjects with similar non-madrasa educational backgrounds and exposure to influences of modernity. The last indicator necessitates the revival of Ahl al-Quran in the domain of modernity. It has been established that the Ahl al-Quran's discourse on Islam was not simply an academic exercise between the proponents and opponents about certain ideas and theological presumptions. As Chapter

6 indicates the discourse had implications beyond the confines of an intellectual debate. It had a broader role in the context of the newly formed state of Pakistan where the ideologies and ideas related to Ahl al-Quran and Islamic modernism played an insignificant role in the shaping of its religious policies and their place in the newly formed state.

#### 1.4. OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The study has been divided into seven chapters with Introduction and Concluding Remarks constituting independent chapters. Chapters 1 and 7 respectively. Chapter 2 provides a historical survey of the various Sunni Muslim groups that emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth century and helps contextualize their theological affiliations and backgrounds. In particular, the contestations about Hadith and the Prophet in the Islamic religious traditions of these groups have been given prominence in this chapter.

The core arguments of the study have been presented from Chapters 3 to 6. Chapter 3 offers an extensive assessment of the emerging new trends in the fields of *Tafsir* and *Hadith* spearheaded by Sayyid Ahmad Khan and those influenced by him though it has been argued in this chapter that the idea about the Quran as the only repository of Divine guidance and the primary sacred text of Islamic tradition had begun to gain currency among a few religious scholars in South Asia and beyond in the latter half of the nineteenth century. In order to impress upon Muslims the primacy of the Quran as a universal and encompassing text with a rational approach, attempts were made by the likes of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muhammad Abduh of Egypt to write rational commentaries that were in tune with the impact of colonialism, modernity and findings of the ongoing scientific developments. This required a fresh look at the Quran without the support of all extraneous material in the form of *Hadith* or classical *Tafsir* for the purpose of stripping the Quran of all its legendary tales and tales of woe and woe events so as to reconcile dogma with modern intellectual attitudes. The dialectics of this new exegesis actually involved relocating the authority of the text through a process of interpretation whereby the details of history came to be of marginal significance and only the moral vision of Islam as a whole remained relevant.<sup>14</sup> In summing up Sayyid Ahmad Khan's religious ideas, the present study has observed that he has called for a rationalist scrutiny of the contents of *Hadith* *mutamam* instead of

simply accepting them on the basis of the second chain of transmission (*isnad*). This approach is in sharp contrast to some among the *Ahl al-Qur'an* who, in their extreme, go to the extent of declaring that Prophet Muhammad (*ṣallāh*) was invested with no special authority nor was he assigned any role other than that of a humbly relaying the divine revelation. This mitigation of Prophet's status to that of a postman – as the opponents of *Ahl al-Qur'an* alleged was a whole new idea, at least, in the context of historic Muslim societies of *Ud-dīn*.<sup>1</sup> The analysis offered in the chapter attempts to highlight the influence of Sayyid Ahmad Khān in importing of a more radically revisionist approach espoused by the *Ahl al-Qur'an*.

Chapter 4 probes the history of the shift from a paradigm envisaging a central role for the Prophet in matters of Islamic beliefs and practices to absolute reliance on the Qur'anic text for religious guidance as propounded by Maulwi Abdulah Chakrabarti (d. 1966) at the turn of the twentieth century. The writings of Ahmad-ud-Din Chakrabarti *Ahl al-Qur'an* movement have been discussed in the historical-political context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Punjab. It has been argued that during the period there was considerable inter-religious polemics, mostly among the Muslims, Christians and Arya Samajis, were being negotiated and ultimate binaries of authentic versus man-made sacred texts and exclusively versus morality of the commentaries were brought into the foreground of contestations. For an understanding of Maulwi Abdulah's religious worldview and his contributions to the religious, discursive and polemical discourses, the chapter analyzes the writings of Maulwi Abdulah on various aspects of Islam and contents of the journal, *al-Jam' al-Qur'an* published by his *Ahl al-Qur'an* organisation. The controversies generated by the religious polemics of Maulwi Abdulah and his opponents have also been taken note of.

Chapter 5 offers a critical appraisal of an Ahmadiya-based *Ahl al-Qur'an* group named *Umm al-Mu'minān*. The main thrust of the religious ideas of Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Amrohi has been described as an attempt to project Islam as a universal religion for the purpose of the 'substantiation' Ahmad-ud-Din's exegetical and other writings have been probed. On the basis of textual analysis of these sources, it has been argued that Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din's projection of Islam as a universal religion had at its taciturn the emphasizing of the 'universally humanist teachings' of Islam. This required an Ahmad-ud-Din's past, extirpating Aryan-centric out of Islamic injunctions and extending reverence to all the prophets and prophet-like figures of the world instead of an exclusive

focus on the personage of Prophet Muhammad (p. 16). The differences in the respective approaches of Maulana Abdullah and Ahwaj Ahmad ud-Din Amrullah towards the Isnad paradigm in general and Hadith or Prophet in particular have also been pointed out. It has been argued in the chapter that the two scholars share a similar stance on Hadith with the difference that Ahmad ud-Din does not endorse replacement of Hadith with Quran in all those aspects of religion for which some Quranic sources like Hadith, *Fatwa* and *Hijab* are generally used. While Khwaja Ahmad ud-Din Amrullah absolves himself of the responsibility of furnishing details of the Quran-based ritual observances by holding the view that the external form of these rituals matters little other than Quran scholars have negotiated the information vacuum arising from the exclusion of the Prophet's authority in a variety of ways. In this regard, the views of such scholars as Aslam Jafaripour, Professor of Islamic and Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia in Delhi, Jafar Shah Phulwari and Jamia Uloom have been referred to. Of most significance is the alternative suggested by Jafaripour, who has opined that the portable mode of Muslim ritual observances is valid for its consonance with *Sunnat-i-Muhammadiyah* (a tradition or Sunnah of the Prophet that has been attributed to such a large segment of Muslim population over such a long period of time that it cannot qualify to be untrue). The chapter also discusses the impact of Ahl-i-Quran Jews on the popularity of this alternative discourse on the Isnad paradigm among the college-educated Muslims. In the same chapter, a discourse has been given of scholars like Maulana Masoud and Amin Anwar Isah who, while believing in the authority of the Prophet, the authentic religion has excluded women and the elderly (p. 105). Inevitably, scholars like Jafaripour lay out the possibility of revisiting some aspects of the Sharia and historical details by re-evaluating the texts of esteemed religious authorities.

Chapter 6 is a detailed account of Gibran Ahmad Parwez's *Jahid-e-Islam* as the most influential Ahl-i-Quran organisation of 1970s. The reason is on Parwez's suggested line of reformist action for the nascent Muslim state and its system of laws. The chapter explains that the basic premise of Parwez's religious thought rests on outlining the parameters of an Islamic state which can best be achieved with following the task of *purification*, *corruption*, *justice* and *punishment* in accordance with the dictates of *Umpire* (spiritual setting) and *Law* (temporal setting) with Parwez's concepts of an Islamic state is his emphasis on establishing a social order that caters for the material needs of the Muslims. His views are shown as having an impact on the draft of the amended family

laws in 1961 and similar policies of Islamic modernism in Pakistan. The chapter also discloses the details of Parwez's close consanguinity with General Ayub Khan during the 1960s in order to highlight the steps taken to institutionalize Islamic modernism in Pakistan. On the basis of hitherto unexplored primary source material, the chapter adds considerable new information and a different theoretical understanding about the policies of Islam in Pakistan during the period 1947-69. It has been argued that the discourse of Islamic modernism was central to the policies of Islam in Pakistan during the period specified. It helped the power elites' in achieving their vested interest of precluding the Umma from the state structure, preventing Pakistan from being run along modified traditions of Islam, forging an Islam-based national identity to subdue the centrifugal pull of ethnic sub-nationalisms, and actualizing their own religious ideals in the shaping of the new state.

In the conclusion an overall assessment of the role and influence of Ahl al-Qur'an movements and ideas during the twentieth century has been undertaken. Also, an attempt has been made to underline the impact of Ahl al-Qur'an movements on the approaches of more traditional scholars of Islam and a growing trend of questioning the 'uncontested' Hadith in the contemporary popular and specialized literature on Islam. In this way the present study attempts to trace the trajectory of Ahl al-Qur'an thought from the late nineteenth century up to the present times.

## NOTES

1. Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *On Understanding Islam: Selected Studies* (The Hague, 1978), 127-8.
2. The term Ahl al-Qur'an and a nuanced understanding of the complexities of its usage has been discussed in greater detail later in the Introduction.
3. The term South Asian Islam is not to be understood as a category of distinct religious traditions with ascertainable features which sets it apart from 'Islamic' culture in South Asia. It has simply been used as a reference to explore the history of Islam in South Asia.
4. Some of the Ahl al-Qur'an scholars, like Jamuna Inuqi (1886-1972) and Imad Ahmad Usmani (d. 99) were not Punjab-based but their contributions have also been discussed in order to give a comprehensive picture of the Ahl al-Qur'an religious doctrines and gauge the influence of these individuals on the various Ahl al-Qur'an movements operating in the Punjab.
5. In addition, several appendices have been attached in which an attempt has been made to give a brief account of the major Hadith collections and the compilers. The key terms used in Hadith sciences have also been explained so as to facilitate the understanding of a general reader about the theological orientations described in

question the status of the past, much less the status of the past as a source of knowledge and authority of Hadith.

6. John Barton, *An Introduction to the Hadith* (Edinburgh, 1994), 29.
7. See Chapter 3 for details.
8. See Chapter 3 for details.
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therefore demands that the term *Arabic*, in turn, is the (2) can with the notion of at least 30 per cent of the whole text of the Quran, which is the main criterion. Such a reading of the Quranic texts – in light of the (1) – can be done since previous findings and insights have shown the Muslim community did not always have been yet fully conscious of such a high (1) text usage. For this reason, the term *Arabic* in this book is to be understood as *Arabic Quran* (Pfeiffer 1988). The English title of the book has to be a little published under this title: *The Quran between Reading of the Quran & Construction to the Decoding of the Quran* (Berlin, 2007).

5. A. Mulla hat zu muslimischen Lesarten kommen: *Die Abweichungen der Lesarten zum Wort in der Hadithe* (Paris, 1979).
6. M. M. al-Azami: *Reading in Early Islamic Manuscripts* (Leiden, 2002) *Reading in Islamic Methodology and Literature* (Leiden, 2002).
7. M. L. Wadadi: *Islamic Manuscripts in Europe: Development and Special Features* (Leiden, 2001).
8. F. Sezgin: *Geschichte der Arabischen Schriftsprache*, 3 (Leiden, 1967).
9. M. A. S. al-Sayid: *Arabic Manuscripts in the Islamic World* (Leiden, 1967).
10. M. J. Coulson: *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh, 1964).
11. J. Burton: *The Collection of the Quran* (Cambridge, 1977); *An Introduction to the Quran* (Edinburgh, 1994); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).
12. M. J. Coulson: *Reading in the Quran and Hadith: The Formation of the Islamic Law of Inheritance* (Berkeley, 1986).
13. M. J. Coulson: *The Arabization of the Islamic Law in the Quran* (Leiden, 1969).
14. M. J. Coulson: *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).
15. M. J. Coulson: *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).
16. M. J. Coulson: *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).
17. M. J. Coulson: *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).
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32. M. J. Coulson: *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).
33. M. J. Coulson: *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990); *The Quran and its Arabic Language* (Edinburgh, 1990).





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## 2

### South Asian Islam in the Late Nineteenth Century: An Overview

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to trace the genealogy of various Sunni Muslim groups which emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Apart from the strictly religious concerns which inspired scholarly figures to emphasise the need for a strict adherence to Islamic religious traditions, the socio-political conditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, bearing an impact in such a shift, have been contextualized. It has been maintained that the reformist discourses initiated by the scholars in the eighteenth century became increasingly more important, as militant, as well as intellectual, attempts were made to bring about their enforcement during the nineteenth century. This increased importance of reformist discourses in the Islamic religious traditions has been attributed to the emergence of Ulama as custodians of Islam in the face of lack of Muslim political authority to enforce the dictates of Shariat. What aided them in their cherished goal of reaching out to the Muslims to broadcast an authentic version of Islam was the print medium. The referential works of the scholars of the past, Quranic commentaries and Hadith collections could now be mass-produced and widely disseminated. The chapter explains that the cardinal feature of this reformist Islamic tradition emphasized the centrality of Prophet and the need of adhering to his teachings and practices in minutest details possible. This helps to serve as a backdrop for a fuller explanation in the coming chapters of the Ahl al-Quran's religious discourse which questions such a reverence for the authority of the past.

## 2.2 TRACING THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF REFORMIST MOVEMENTS

The ascendancy of European colonialism from the eighteenth century onwards resulted in the subjugation of a number of Muslim populations regions. This expansive European power brought about a disruption of the Muslim position in religious authorities and social patterns of observances. The deterioration of political authority in the face of mounting challenges posed to the sustainability of a polity favourable to the concerns of Muslims was attributed by the scholars of that period to the stagnation of religious thought and the absence of strict religious training. There emerged various revivalist movements claiming restoration for those who are to rectify this situation. These movements were revivalists in the sense that they agreed that a genuine revival of the principles of Islam, both politically and religiously by way of reclaiming its prevalent modes of practices and discourses from what were deemed to be the 'dark ages' in the past. They also emphasized necessitating adherence to true Islam among the Muslims as the panacea of their deterioration from 'decline' and 'decay'.

The intellectual legacy of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century movements shaped the views of nineteenth century scholars with the revivalist agenda and the changing political and social milieu of the time. Consequently, the reformers used similar arguments to further the regeneration of the religious discourses in order to rectify the corruption of true Islam and to propagate the revivalist agenda for reform in the beliefs and practices of the Muslims.

The pioneering figures spearheading important trends in Islamic religious revivalism during the eighteenth century included Shah Waliullah (d. 1036/1627), Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahab (d. 1104/1792) and Muhammad Ali Shah Waliy (d. 1204/1819). There was a clear trend of a contentious line of thought, but it was they opposed the practice of blindly imitating the dictates laid down by the towering figures of the past (*mufta* meaning *mufta* (legal schools) in Sunni Islam, namely Hanafi, Shafi, Maliki and Hanbali). They emphasized with varying degrees of severity that it was not binding for Muslims to blindly follow the teachings of any particular legal school. Also, they contested the notion of the 'closure' of *ijtihad* with the coming of a consensus of the four schools.

For instance, Shah Waliy argued that the door of *ijtihad* had never been closed and that *mufta* (learned scholars) and theologians have to

and researchers ever since the purported closure took place. To prove his point, he presented a biographical dictionary of about six hundred personalities from earlier generations whom he considered qualified to be ranked as *mujtahids*. This served the purpose of showing that the practice of Ijtihad and existence of *mujtahids* was a vital component of Islam in every age. On the central issue of the desirability of adhering to a particular school, Shah Wali Ullah, the ideological mentor of various Muslim movements since the nineteenth century resorted to a syncretic approach. He discussed the shortcomings of his contemporary Ulama, keeping them to camels with strings in their noses and one would expect rejected particularism or particularism regarding any *mazhab*. He, nevertheless, acknowledged the virtues of these *mazhabs* as encompassing truth and their merits for laymen who did not have specialist knowledge of Islamic sciences to arrive at the truth on their own.

This dispute regarding imitation of a particular *mazhab* ended in being *mingled* with its opposite of *group inequalities* and the direct response to several sources is the preferable way to practice the authentic teachings of Islam and providing a panacea for the worldly revival of fortunes of the Muslims became the keystone of religious conservatism among some Sunni Muslim groups which emerged in North India during the nineteenth century.

Along with the reformatory current emphasized by the Ulama discussed above, Sufis too had initiated reform in their orders. In the case of the Furuq there was a revival of the Naqshbandi branch of the Qadiri order which was inspired by the work of Shah Kalim Ullah (1733-1821) and Shah Ishtiaq ad Din (1717-1783). Both strove to reform Sufi practices and emphasize strict observance of the Sharia and the example of the Prophet. Similarly in Delhi, members of the Naqshbandiyya order became motivated by Mirza Mazhar Jan-i-Jaman (1700-80) and Mir Dard (d. 21-85) made efforts to purify mystic practices and prevailed upon members and followers of their order to follow the Sharia more closely.<sup>4</sup> This strong interconnectivity between Sharia and Tariqa (mystic path) was another important consideration of subsequent Muslim reform movements that came god during the heyday of colonial power in South Asia. A good example of such a movement is the Deobandi movement that was established in 1866, as embodied in its distinctive strict adherence to Sharia while allowing its members into reformed Sufi orders.

In the other cases of *revivalism* at a local or particular level, the a latent contradiction with its Islamic means. This is testified by the fact that many military movements were led by Ulama who had also been

initiated into Sub orders. For example, in South Asia, such political acts of resistance sanctified as Jihad were led by Sayyid Ahmad and Shah Ismail in North West India, who aspired to purify practices of the Naqshbandiyya order to which they claimed adherence. Haji Shariatullahs Faraiz movement in Bengal was similarly founded to resist the colonial regime and bring about a change in the religious outlook of Bengali Muslims for a stricter following of Islamic religious traditions.<sup>8</sup> Such Jihad movements were equally pronounced in regions beyond South Asia. During the nineteenth century a number of Muslim groups across the globe were swept into Jihad pawns seeking to reclaim power from foreign, Christian occupants. Most important among these were, the movements of Abdul Qadir of the Qadiri order against the French in Algeria, Shaykh Shamil of the Naqshbandiyya against the Russians, Mehdî El-Farwî in Sudan against the British and members of the Sanusi order against the Italians. These movements, too, were led and inspired by religious figures and were not divested of ideas of reforms in Muslim beliefs and practices.<sup>9</sup>

### 2.3 SUNNI ISLAM AND THE DISCOURSE ON REFORM IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

After the abortive military attempts in the form of Jihad movements to restore the political fortunes of the Muslims, the Ulama—especially those actively involved in fighting against the colonial powers—came to the realization that the absence of a central Muslim authority to oversee implementation of the Shariat made it even more important to revive adherence to true Islam among the fellow Muslims. In this regard different religious groups, which emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century, had their respective versions of what constituted authentic Islam. For them, adherence to that creed alone was permissible and the key to worldly and other worldly gains. Their underlying idea was that the Ulama should serve as custodians of Islamic tradition in South Asia and guide the Muslims in matters of religious beliefs and practices so as to enable them to live their lives in accordance with the dictates of Quran and Hadith. In this way, even if the Shariat could not be enforced from above to order the course of collective life, the Muslims could still be expected to follow Islam in their individual capacities.

In pursuance of these objectives, three major religious groups among the Sunni Muslims of South Asia emerged in the post-1857 period. The crystallization of their dogmatic stances, which took place in the later

decades of the nineteenth century imparted a distinct identity to all three of them. Among them, the Deoband and Ahle-Hadith share a common ancestry traceable to Shah Waliullah and his progeny. They have similar views on the undesirability of local, cultural and custom-based practices such as *cin* (commemorating death anniversary of a *Sufi*) signifying his communion with God) and other shrine-related rituals, as being a deviation to original Islam. But they have dissimilar views on the desirability of following any particular school of law or fiqh. Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan, a key figure among the Ahle-Hadith scholars, wrote that the important thing is to follow the Quran and the Sunna, not the creed of a particular man. We are neither followers of Abd al-Wahab nor of Muhammad Isma'il *Shakhsi*. For us the Quran and Sunna are enough for proper guidance.<sup>19</sup>

The Deobandis and Bareilis, on the other hand, are strict Hanafis who see in their preferred school of law the most perfect embodiment of the teachings of the Quran and the Prophet's *Sunnat* and strive to make their guide to life based on Islam. The difference between Deobandis and Bareilis, then, is largely that the latter accept customary practices (in education closely associated with the *pirs*, spiritual guides of the shrines) and the evocation of the supernatural powers and blessings of other revered figures from the Muslim past, while the former disregard these practices as an accretion to Islam.

In addition to these groups, there were those which can be categorised as Islamic Modernists. However, terms like Islamic Modernism and Muslim Modernism do not have a precise definition and can be interpreted in varied ways and ascribed to a disparate set of groups and persons as a result of overlapping territorial frontiers. As like the Deobandis, Bareilis and Ahle-Hadith, in the present work, the term Islamic Modernism has been understood as an intellectual endeavour to re-interpret the pre-Islamic, in varying degrees, within the discursive framework of Western notions of humanism, enlightenment and rationality. Islamic modernists hold the view that the real spirit of Islam is misrepresented by them as being essentially rationalistic, a warning among the Muslims of the day. This phenomenon is attributed by them to the false interpretations made by the clerics over centuries. While modernists criticised the need to acquire Western knowledge for socio-political gains, they simultaneously championed the cause of bringing about an interpretation of Islam that would be compatible with the dictates of the rapidly changing world around them. It can be seen, hence, that modernists share the same discursive space as various Ahle-Quran groups, yet differ from them in that their critique

is embedded in and informed by Western discourses on enlightenment, modernity, and rationality.

## 2.4 THE EMERGENCE OF THE ULAMA'S REFORMATORY AGENCY

The emerging reformatory agency of the Ulama during the nineteenth century was influenced by and simultaneously indicative of the changes set in motion by 'modernization' of socio-economic institutions and the concomitant dichotomization of public and 'private' spheres brought about by the colonial state in South Asia.<sup>1</sup> I should be noted that envisioning a dichotomy between separate domains of sovereignty within the apparatus of colonial society was not a phenomenon unique to Muslim religious reformers and the Ulama alone. As Partha Chatterjee has argued, nationalist writers, intellectuals and political figures conceived the world of social institutions and practices in the domains of the 'material' and the 'spiritual'. According to him:

The material is the domain of the jurisdiction of the government and of statecraft; of science and technology and of what the West has proved its superiority and the East has succumbed to. In this domain then, Western superiority had to be acknowledged and its accomplishments carefully studied and replicated. The spiritual, on the other hand, is an inner domain belonging to every individual and community. The greater ones are emulating Western skills in the material domain; therefore, the greater the need to preserve the distinctness of one's spiritual culture.

In an earlier phase, however, Indian reformers had looked to the colonial state to bring about change in traditional institutions and customs. It was only in the later half of the nineteenth century that there developed a strong resistance to colonial interference in the construction of national culture. Chatterjee's new rationalism is useful in studying the dialectics of elitist currents among the political figures and religious movements in post-1857 South Asia, but as I shall not avoid shortcoming, Chatterjee partially pre-empted criticism about his conceptualization of an isolated inner domain of national culture by recognizing the immense, if not the most important role played by nationalists and reformers in the transformation of this national culture from traditional to modern but nevertheless non-Western. This so-called transformation was only in relation to what was being considered as a traditional order as it was strictly and unequivocally explicit as contrasted, especially, different from the Western 'imperial'. Paradoxically, the essentialization of cultural difference which helped



preclude the colonizer from entering domains of national life and establishing its sovereignty over it was being contested in the outer modern domain where claims to the universality of Western regimes of power were asserted. This served the obvious goal of a re-staking claims to power and overturning the subordination of colonized middle class by eradicating all signs of racial difference on the basis of which the colonized people had been ranked as inferior by inferior and therefore undeserving of the status of self-governing citizens of a modern society.<sup>1</sup> Despite the explanatory catalogue offered by Chatterjee, a thesis has been put forward recently by more notable names such as well as other academics. Sarkar has argued that a materialist, Westernist divide is underpinned by orientalism and is biased in the favour of elite male domineering Brahminic groups and individuals insofar as it denies agency to marginalized sections like women whose initiative or autonomy apparently finds expression only inside the home or at best in autobiographies. According to her, Chatterjee's thesis is deficient in equating the role of women active in politics with the early twentieth century and their own initiative in moving beyond the constraints of an enlightened domesticity offered to them by the reformers and the nationalists. Ayaz Jafar, while acknowledging a useful deconstruction of colonial society between a public sphere and a religious and a domestic informed private space, does not agree with their watertight compartmentalization. According to her, 'far from eliminating politics from the realms of religion and culture, the colonial state did much to bring these spaces closer than ever and to shape them in the process'.<sup>2</sup>

However, despite its limitations, Jafar's Chatterjee thesis remains relevant to the study of Muslim reform movements of South Asia who experienced within colonial England a world of both hope and alienation. Following the trajectory of discourse of modernization in the period following the collapse of Muslim political authority in South Asia, the last decades of the nineteenth century, Khatun notes that the position of the Ulama in the political hierarchy underwent a shift. They were no longer an essential component of the religious-administrative setup as they had been under Muslim political authority nor could count much on the patronage of princely courts. With the formal declaration of British rule following the Indian revolt of 1857, the Ulama tended, by large, to leave aside the Deobandi tradition of *mufti* (large village or a small town), the Deoband, Saharanpur, Kandhalib, Gurgaon, Bareilly in which many of them had their roots.<sup>3</sup> The primary motive was to move away from centres of power and take the spirit of reform

as it was in prevalence since the early nineteenth century, to small towns apparently unaffected by the onslaught of the colonial regime and its ways of exercising power.

As I already noted, after attempts at reasserting Muslim political authority by the way of Jihad had failed to produce desired results, the Ulama resorted to an introspective mode and an inward-looking approach. It became important for them to preserve what remained of Islamic virtues and piety and to inculcate the same among individual Muslims so as to force the establishment of a definite standard of faith and practice based entirely on Quran and Sunnat. This trend can be seen in the *fatwas* (religious-juristic rulings) of that period which represent a movement away from matters of rulership towards issues of individual moral concerns.<sup>1</sup> It was because the purported separation between the religiously informed private sphere and secular public sphere had helped direct the direction of religious reform towards an enhanced focus on the private religious sphere of the individual which was addressed by the Ulama through various means of prophylization.

For this purpose the most important medium made available to contemporary Ulama was that of print. Instead of heralding the prebend of a Caliphate—as happened with the printing of the Bible in the vernaculars during the phase of Protestant reform in Europe—the advent of print enabled the Ulama to preserve the autonomy and authority of their own Islamic religious sphere. They wrote and published separately for both a learned, Ulama audience and for the general public. The former category of works embraced within its fold commentaries especially on Hadith collections, written in Arabic language for the consumption of a learned audience of specialists in the field of Islamic knowledge (i.e. Ulama), whether at home or abroad.<sup>2</sup> This enabled them to foster a transnational sacred religious community. The latter category of works enabled the Ulama to reach out to ordinary Muslims with speeches about their respective brands of Islamic creeds (enable them to live a life based on the teachings of the Quran and the Sunnat in a period when Muslim political power was no longer in place to enforce compliance with Muslim laws but the belief in Muslim rule in South Asia). The medium of print was instrumental in broadcasting knowledge about Islam and its teachings and disseminating it widely for the benefit of a constituency of reform built up for themselves by the Ulama in Muslim society at large. It was also inevitably required for the working of their newly established madrasah system and for countering the polemics waged by its supporters of other rival religious groups. No wonder

then that the Ulama of Deoband were extremely grateful to a Hindu publisher, Munshi Nawal Kishore, for publishing classics of Islamic sciences and generously donating a number of books for the library of the Deoband madrasa. As one historian of Deoband noted, 'for a long time it was with the help of the books donated by this one non-Muslim that the teachers and students at the Dar al-ulum at Deoband fulfilled their religious and scholarly requirements, understood the Qur'an and solved the linguistic problems of Hadith.'<sup>22</sup>

## 2.5 THE CENTRALITY OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S (PBUH)

### FIGURE AS THE 'BEST AND LAST' OF GOD'S PROPHETS

For all the different Sufi groups which emerged during that period with their competing and contradictory dogmatic approaches, one theme was common: there was an enhanced focus on the figure of Muhammad (PBUH)—the Prophet of Islam.<sup>23</sup> It was not as if such reverence had hitherto been lacking. Rather it was the outcome of an imposed imperative caused by changes in the social context and political power equations. An increasingly charged atmosphere which regularly witnessed controversial religious polemics among Muslims, Christian missionaries and other religions, made Muslims ever more conscious of the image of the Prophet. More importantly, it came to them naturally to authenticate their brand of Islam with the person of the Prophet as he was able to convince their followers of its genuineness.

This growing emphasis on the person of the Prophet as the exemplar of human perfection and presentation of one's Sufi, shaykh, or pir as modelled on the traits and qualities of the Prophet, can also be attributed to an enhanced focus on the individual self – a colonial/capitalist by-product. The Prophet's new image, thus constructed, emphasized a wide array of his human virtues and projected him as beloved, charitable, frugal, a lover of children, steadfast, successful and so on. This can be taken as an expression of the growing sense of the self and a newly emerging middle class Muslim world forced to fall back upon and coming to terms with its own resources.<sup>24</sup>

In short, every simple Muslim reform movement ranging from the Wahabi-banded Ahl-Hadith and so heretical Ahmadis and from customist al-Barelwis to *Arshad-i-Muslimeen* invoked the authority of the Prophet to denounce its rival group and establish its own credentials as the flag-bearer of true Islam.

The perceptions and ideas about the Prophet and his relative stature and authority assumed greater significance in the context of Muslim reform movements of the late nineteenth century. In the event his human attributes were to be emphasised in as to make him more relevant as a source and model for Muslims to follow, a backwash could not be avoided from those who were in favour of continuing with a more traditional mode of customary religious practices.

This is best seen in Ahmad Raza Khan's disputes with Deobandis and Ahl-i-Hadith groups. A religious polemic that had first been waged between Shah Waliullah and Maun-ul-Jalil Azayzadah in Delhi in the 1870s about the possibility of God creating a Prophet similar in stature and virtues to Prophet Muhammad (sa) was extended well into the period following the Indian revolt and now addressed further such queries. In his enumeration of persons who said things demeaning to the figure of the Prophet, Ahmad Raza Khan—who believed in Prophet Muhammad (sa) to be inspired by God from His own light and in the subsequent creation originating therefrom—stated: "Some of the associates with Deoband and the Ahl-i-Hadith such as Shah Waliullah and Ahmad Gangohi and Nazir Husayn Dehliwi. They were alleged to have disapproved the Prophet by saying the Sahābā were ignorant of the character of the Prophet Muhammad (sa) or that in each of the seven worlds there were prophets like Muhammad (sa)." <sup>10</sup>

A dispute about what could be regarded as the true practice of the Prophet was equally important and significant that and time being. The method of performing prayer in accordance with the Sunna was one highly important point of contention among the two Muslim religious groups. The Ahl-i-Hadith contended that the worshippers should recite the *Fatiha*—the first chapter of the Quran—along with the *Qam* 'say Amen loudly' and raise their hands' before going into the bowing position. On the other part Ahl-i-Hadith could cite a number of traditions from Hadith collections regarded as authentic by Sunni Muslims to the effect that the above mentioned practices were observed by the Prophet during prayer. However, whether Deobandis or Ahl-i-Hadith held in view that these practices were later introduced as reported by accounts of the Prophet's companions and followers. The debate involved intricacies regarding techniques of Hadith criticism, taking up a more serious and the relative merit of various traditions and the authenticity of their reporting on an event. Easy availability of works of Hadith and commentaries or classical commentaries due to printing in Urdu made it possible for the Ulama to make use of the new material to their benefit.

All the Hadith scholars wrote new commentaries of a theologically Hadithist character to show how Hanafis at the lowest level of thinking, as Shi'ites had deviated from the practice of the Prophet as reported in Hadith literature. Hanafis, especially Denkhah, responded in kind by writing multi-volume works to counter the Ash'ari Hadith scholars. Hanafis had gone astray in their understanding of the shari'a, especially Hadith.<sup>1</sup> The legal-theological differences involved can best be explained by looking from a holistic perspective between two religiously literate groups, Denkhah and Ash'ari Hadith scholars, which is reported to have taken place in 1907.<sup>2</sup>

Hamud Ullah Mirathi and Ahmad Ali Mirathi engaged themselves in a lively argument on the issue of *Qurt al-haif* (fear). Hamud Ullah, the Ash'ari-Hadith scholar, made his claim in favour of the practice on the basis of a Hadith reported by *Abu Hurayra* who says that whenever he does not recite *Qurt al-haif* cannot be said to have offered his prayers. In the Hadith, he argued, the rule has general application and is not specific to the grave danger of the Ash'ari-Aliya principle, as stated against the observance of this practice rested on the decrees issued by pious and most respected learned scholars. He Ahmad bin Hanbal was interpreted it differently. Also, there is a Hadith to be found in an earlier collection in which the narrator is reported to have made a statement that could be used to justify Ahmad Ali's stance on the issue. This Hadith was found by Hamud Ullah as a statement of the Companion, which would not stand as an argument in the face of a *Mursal* Hadith. Ahmad Ali then cited a tradition from *Muawana* on the authority of Abu al-ah in Umar to the effect that he did not recite *Qurt al-haif* when the prayer was being led by a *Imam* and only recited it while he was offering the prayers alone. His propensity to find supporting evidence from the practice of Umar—second among the Companions, Uthayb of Blam, and Yahya of Ash-Shayb—whom were never adhering to the practice of the Prophet could not be matched by his own evidence that the practice was similar to that of the Ash'ari. Ahmad Ali was again able to quote from *Muawana* an incident in which the Prophet seemed to have been distracted by some reciting verses during the prayer. This related incident in *Hurayra's* report that the Prophet did not say people continuing in a low voice in a place where he was reciting. At the end of another Hadith in *Buayra*, Abu Hurayra, the narrator, said that when he offering prayers behind a *Imam* should recite the verses in his heart. Ahmad Ali found this corroborative in a *Qurt* against the author is the Companion. For that Hamud Ullah searched for a reference from the Prophet himself. With some effort he was able to find a *Mursal* tradition enjoining the believers not to recite verses during the

recitation made by the Imam but did sanction the reciting of *Fatḥa* in one's heart. As his *Ikāfātī* *inṣāpīyah* opponents found it increasingly difficult to refute the Hadith evidence cited by the Ahl-i-Hadith scholar in favour of his stance, he resorted to debating the meaning of Hadith on a lexicographical basis. In his opinion it could not be maintained that one recites verses and also remains silent. Hence the recitation laid down by the Prophet in his Hadith cannot be met. This called for an explanation of the term 'silence'. Fāriḍ Ullah referred to a Hadith from *Bukhārī* in which Abu Hurayrah reportedly asked the Prophet as to what does he recite while he remains 'silent' in the position between calling the *takbīr* and recitation of *Fatḥa*. This was taken as evidence to prove that it is possible to recite and be silent at the same time. Ahmād Ali asked for Arabic lexicographical works so he brought to him but failed to prove that 'silence' in its 'real' meanings implies refraining from pronouncing or uttering words. With all options of his rival exhausted, the Ahl-i-Hadith scholar claimed victory for himself and his dogma.

The above example shows that even when rival Sunni groups were engaged in disputes regarding Prophet Muhammad's virtues and the divinity of his stature, they did express their unflinching faith in the personality of the Prophet as the best role model for the whole of humanity, the imitation of whose morals, teachings and practices was vital to leading a life as a true Muslim. Against this backdrop, the emergence of a religious discourse allowing for contestation of Prophet's authority and the historicity of his recorded words and actions and, hence, 'more importantly, to the whole Islamic paradigm in particular, was an important development among the South Asian Muslims.

## 2.6 AN OVERVIEW OF MAJOR SUNNI MUSLIM GROUPS IN LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITISH INDIA

### AHL-I-HADITH

A student of Shah Wali Ullah's grandson Shāh Ishaq Nāzīr Husayn Dehlawi (1805-1902)<sup>1</sup> is considered as one of the persons in influencing and shaping the contours of late Ahl-i-Hadith in South Asia. He, along with Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal,<sup>2</sup> saw through the emergence of Ahl-i-Hadith a group with distinct views on Hadith and Fiqh, with an extensive network of Ulama spread all over South Asia but concentrated more importantly in the Punjab. This may be because many of Nāzīr Husayn's students hailed from the Punjab. They included Abdullah

Ghaznawi, Abdul Munim Warisabad, Hafiz Muhammad b. Bara Allah Lakhawi, Muhammad Husayn Batalawi, Samiullah Amritsari and Ibrahim Mir Syadkot. Special note should be made of Abdallah Chaznawi (1844-1911). Born in Qila Bahada, Khet in the outskirts of Ghazni, Abdallah Chaznawi was expelled from his hometown in Afghanistan shortly before the outbreak of a war of 1857 on the account of his bristling views. He eventually migrated to Jeshwar and thereafter spending some in Lahore and Delhi, finally settled down in Amritsar. There he set up Madrasa Chaznawiya later changed into Madrasa Taqwiyat ul-Islam by Abdur Rashid Chaznawi which was renamed after his death by his progeny, Abdullah Chaznawi. He had a large family most of whom were scholars. They continued to occupy an important role among the Ahl-e-Hadith. Coming all over India especially in Punjab other notable accounts of Nazir Husayn from Punjab like Muhammad Husayn Batalawi and Samiullah Amritsari, set up journals named *Liberal Sunna* and *Amul-Hadith* respectively serving as effective organs for propagating the tenets of Ahl-e-Hadith while at the same time engaging in polemics with their rival Muslim groups as well as missionaries and Hindu revivalist organisations. Scholar like Hafiz Muhammad Lakhawi and Maqbul Hussain Chah established important Ahl-e-Hadith seminaries in East Punjab which continued functioning under the aegis of their respective successors. Another important focus of Ahl-e-Hadith scholars in Punjab was that of Mawlana Abdur Razaq who was taught by Abdallah Chaznawi. In this way Amritsar came to function between the two Ropar Div. of Amritsar came to serve as important centres of Ahl-e-Hadith in East Punjab. In West Punjab Ibrahim Mir Syadkot, Hafiz Muhammad Gaurdatar and Muhammad Ismail Salaf set up prominent madrasas of Ahl-e-Hadith. These madrasas were established by the two in the early second half of the century by the students of Abdul Munim Warisabad (d. 1846) who is said to have filled the state with his students<sup>10</sup> and was once elected to a *dar-ul-ulum*. The teacher of Punjab formed a system. Nazir Husayn and Abdullah Chaznawi became chief Dar-ul-ulum in Warisabad. His influence along with that of Nazir Husayn and Abdullah Chaznawi on the Ahl-e-Hadith movement can be seen from the fact that the proposed movement by Ahl-e-Hadith scholars in 1930 named the *Amritsar Ahl-e-Hadith* was founded and ran by the students of these scholars. They included among others Samiullah Amritsari, Ibrahim Mir Syadkot, Daud Ghaznawi and Muhammad Ali Lakhawi.

## DEOBANDIS

Following the death of Shah Ismaʿil while fighting in the Indian movement led by Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi, Shah Isḥaq along with his young brother Shah Yaʿqub migrated to Arabia. After his departure from Delhi, the Wali Ulla legacy was carried forward by the likes of Nazir Husayn and Shah Abdul Uḥayd. Delhiawi Muḥajir Madani—a descendant of Sharīf Ahmad Sirhindī<sup>2</sup>—rose presenting from the study circle of Abdul Uḥayd, recruited Qasim Nanautwi, Rashīd Ahmad Gangohi, and Yaʿqub Nanautwi. These three personalities, Qasim Nanautwi, were instrumental in setting up a seminary at Deoband near Delhi in 1860. Those who studied there subsequently came to be known as Deobandis. In due course of time they developed into one of the most significant Muslim groups permitted to stay in North India, taking up matters pertaining to the welfare of the Muslims with great zeal. An affiliated madrasa of Deoband was set up in Saranpur and named al-Mazahir al-Ulūm. The founders of Deoband and Mazahir al-Ulūm were students of Maʿwūn Maʿrūf, Asaf al-Dīn Ghalpigi who, in turn, had received instruction from Maʿana Rashīd al-Dīn Kāsim—a prominent disciple of Shah Ahmad Raza. Maʿana Nanautwi had been taught by Shah Isḥaq, as well. Another prominent figure associated with Mazahir al-Ulūm was that of Ahmad A. Muḥaddis Saranpurī. He wrote took the project of publishing authentic editions of *Al-Furqan*, *Maḥsun* and *ʿAṣmazi*.<sup>3</sup> The availability of authentic texts of Hanafi scriptures facilitated the study of Hadith and the possibility of the one of it to argue in favour of one's own religious doctrines. It is because ever since the advent of *ghayr maḥallah* thought in South Asia, it had become imperative for Hanafis to show a concurrence between Hadith and Hanafi fiqh and to counter the claim made by Ahl-i-Haqq that the Hanafī fiqh deviates from some early or laid down injunctions in authentic Ahadith.

While Shah Wali Ullah's family members were directly involved in leading the Jihad movement, all those who led the Uḥma during the war of 1857 were students of his successors. The *fatwa* for Jihad against the British during the revolt was issued by Faiz-i-Haqq Khayrabadi, Sayyid Durr Azam, Nazir Husayn and Shah Abdul Uḥayd Muḥajir Madani. Shah Abdul Uḥayd's students and the founders of Deoband actively fought against the British and for once even took control of the small *qasbah* of Thana Shajay. Their own followers, however, were to continue resisting British rule and even joined hands with the Congress to this end. *Sharīf al-Hind* Meḥmūd ul-Hasan—expelled from Malwa following the First World War for supporting the British as a result against the British—was a



direct disciple of Qasim Nanautawi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. His own followers included Ubayd Ullah Sindhi and Husayn Ahmad Madani, who played a major part in the events leading to the de-colonization of South Asia. Some of Deoband's famous scholars of Hadith and Quran, too, received their education from Mahmud-ul-Hasan. They include Anwar Shah Kashmiri and Shahryar Ahmad Usmani. Anwar Shah's commentary of *Hikmat* in Arabic is used as part of Hadith in studies in many places across the Muslim world. His own students, too, are well known for their scholarly works. They include Muft. Muhammad Shah's Mansur Ahsan Gilani, Idris Kandahari, Yasul Dastgir, Mulla Hasan Amirani and Qari Tayyab.

## BAREILWIS

The so-called split in Sunni Islam in South Asia became evident with the publication of Shah Isma'il's *Taqwipati-na-nama*—a tract that forcefully denounced the prevailing 'un-Islamic' practices among the Muslims of South Asia. Shah Isma'il's stance was challenged by Shah Asadullah's student Maulw. Fazal-Haq Khayrabadi.<sup>10</sup> In support of Shah Isma'il, a pupil of Shah Ishaq named Maqsum Siraj-ul-Din Ahmad, wrote a book titled *Sirrat-ni-Imam*. Another of Shah Isma'il's descendants was Maulw. Amir Ahmad Naqvi, who wrote a treatise to refute Fazal-Haq's allegations.<sup>11</sup> In his endeavours, Fazal-Haq Khayrabadi was supported by some members of the Shah Wali Ullah family. Shah Maqsum Ullah and Shah Muhammad Musa—sons of Shah Rafi-ud-Din—supported Fazal-Haq Khayrabadi in a theological debate that took place between him, Shah Isma'il and Abdul Haq in Jamia Masjid Dehli in 1824.<sup>12</sup>

Scholars, other than Fazal-Haq Khayrabadi, who had direct links to the Shah Wali Ullah family as students of Shah Abdul Aziz, included Muft. Saad-ud-Din Azamda, Ghulam Muhyi-ud-Din Qasuri and Shah Ali-Rusul Qadiri Barkati Amrohi. Ahmad Raza Khan—one of the most important figures in late nineteenth century Sunni Islam in India who provided the intellectual basis for *Barelvi* Islam through his prolific corpus of writings—received his spiritual initiation from Shah Ali-Rusul. Other than that, Ahmad Raza Khan was largely self-educated.<sup>13</sup> His ability to acquire vast knowledge of vast and related subjects—his own is often cited by his followers as a proof of miraculous abilities endowed upon him by God Almighty to defend the tenets of the faith from such heretics as the Deobandis and the Ahl-i-Haqq—who were bent upon denigrating the status and prestige of the Prophet.

The Barehwi established their madrasas wherein religious education was imparted in line with the Barehwi version of Islam. This trend of setting up Barehwi madrasas started quite late in time.<sup>44</sup> This is why influential Barehwi figures like Mehr Ali Shah had to go elsewhere for their religious education. He is reported to have received his education in Hadith from Ahmad Al-Muhaddith Saharanpuri.<sup>45</sup> Similarly Fazl-i-Razi Qadiri Badayuni, studied at Farangi Mahal in Lucknow.<sup>46</sup> Even after the setting up of madrasas, Barehwi learning centers remained concentrated largely in North India, especially at places like Bareilly, Badayun, Kharabad, Rampur and Amroha. Their construction and administration was taken up by individual *ulama*. One of the earliest of such institutions was set up in 1893 at Pilibhit by Maulana Wasi Ahmad Muhaddith Sawai. Many of Ahmad Raza Khan Barehwi's closest followers were Wasi Ahmad's students before they arrived at Bareilly to join his circle. Madrasa Shams-ul-Uloom was established in 1899 by Maulana Abdu Qayyum at Badaun. Two madrasas of great importance were Jamia Naimiyya and Dar ul Uloom Hizb al Ahnaf established during the 1920s in Muzaffarabad and Lahore respectively.<sup>47</sup> Ahmad Raza Khan Barehwi also founded a school in 1904 by the name of Madrasa Naimiyya at Rampur. Barehwi interest in *fatwa* writing and the pursuit of other scholarly activities took precedence over this teaching, and best at best he supported such efforts, and instead of taking active charge of its activities he acted as a patron by arranging for funds and donations and occasionally visiting the madrasa to deliver an address or to distribute certificates among the students. His neglect by the most prominent figure of the Barehwi created the lack of a strong central institution as compared to other Muslim movements of the time. Nevertheless, these madrasas were instrumental in creating a network of personal links between the *ulama* and in training new adherents of the movement.

## 2.7 CONCLUSION

To sum up, there emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century a number of Sunni Muslim groups and individuals who attempted to inculcate the true essence of Islam among their fellow Muslims. The Islamic modernists, on their part, called upon the Muslims to revise the tenets of Islamic faith in the light of modern Western education and advancements made in the field of scientific knowledge. A difference in approach regarding the notion of reform can be discerned between the Islamic modernists and the *ulama* subscribing to the religious traditions

of Deoband, Bareilwi and Ahl-i-Hadith; unlike the Islamic modernists, the idea of reform for these Ulama was not to make amends to the religious dictates but to cleanse Islam of its latter day accretions and impress upon Muslims the need to adhere to a pure version of Islam for worldly and other-worldly gains.

It has been maintained in this chapter that the increase in the importance and authority of the Ulama can be attributed to the lack of a centralized Muslim political authority to enforce Shariat. Such a political-religious vacuum gave the Ulama the opportunity of serving as guides for individual Muslims in matters of faith so as to enable them to live their lives in accordance with Quran and Sunna. In addition, the importance of availability of print medium and its impact in broadening the influence of Ulama has also been highlighted. In the nineteenth century, the spread of printing presses enabled the publication of Hadith collections and classical works of Hadith commentaries for wider dissemination. The vernacular versions of these works were now also made available. These printed works were not only vital for the workings of the sprawling madrasa network across South Asia but also helped the Ulama reach out to the common Muslim and present to him—the life practice and precedence of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)—the role model worthy of reverence and emulation in matters of beliefs and practices. Hence, the study of Hadith and the availability of instruction about its various branches helped bolster the role and importance of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in religious debates within the Muslim community and in their polemics with the followers of the other religions.













figure—Ahmad Raza Khan—did not have among his religious teachers members or followers of the Shah Wali Ullah school except for the spiritual training that was administered to him by a disciple of Shah Abdul 'Aziz.

- 44 For details about the Bareilly-based madrasa of Sanyal, *Devotional Islam*, 70–82.
- 45 Muhammad Abdul Hakim Shauq Qadiri, *Fuzara Akhbar Ahl-i Sunnat* (Lahore 1926), I, 536.
- 46 Qadiri, *Nur Nur Chahar*, 297. But this trend could be observed among the followers of other groups as well. It may well be because the boundaries separating these groups from each other had not been sharply defined at yet. Even otherwise, these scholars did not find it necessary to stick to just one teacher or their own religious teachings. They rather preferred to benefit from a variety of sources. For example, Ustad-i Panjab Abdul Mannan Wazirabad, learnt *shafite* from Nazir Husayn and was also for sometime a student of Mazhar Nisai. Similarly Muhammad Husayn Baghawi learnt formal sciences from Mufti Sadr-ud-Din Azurdi. Sanaullah Amirian, in addition to benefiting from Nazir Husayn and Abdul Mannan Wazirabad, was formally enrolled as a student at Deoband.
- 47 For brief details about these madrasas, cf. Sanyal, *Devotional Islam*, 78–84.
- 48 Ibid., 73. When Zafar-ud-Din Durrani—biographer of Ahmad Raza Khan Bareilly—came to Bareilly in 1904–05 desiring of becoming Ahmad Raza's student, the *zaww* advised him to study at an existing institution, the Madrasa Dar-ul-Ishaat. It was later found out to be under the influence of Deobandis. Only then did he take the initiative for setting up a madrasa representative of Bareilly approach toward Islam. Ibid., 73.

# 3

## Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Revisionist Discourse on Hadith, 1870–1898

I am certain that as these Western sciences spread, and their spreading is inevitable and I myself after all, too, help and contribute towards spreading them—there will arise in the hearts of people an uneasiness and carelessness and even a positive disaffection towards Islam as it has been shaped in our time.”

A time will come when a number of liberal-minded Muslims will emerge, as we have nowadays in Germany, where hardly any educated person believes in Bible to be a Book of God. And when such a time comes (for Muslims) then there would not be any problem in saying that Quran is authored by Muhammad.

### 3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter offers a detailed survey and critical evaluation of the emerging new trends and debates in the field of Hadith and other important aspects of Isnad Paradigm during the late nineteenth century. The works of the Orientalists and the activities of the missionaries, in the form of their writings and polemics, engaged the Muslims in debate on various aspects of Islamic beliefs and practices. The important questions addressed in these encounters related to the personal character of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as documented on the basis of Hadith and classical works of Arab history and the compatibility of Quranic teachings with Western notions of rationality and humanity. In this regard the role of William Muir—a colonial administrator, scholar well-versed in ‘Oriental’ languages and a believer in Christianity’s superiority—has been studied at great length as he helped generate heated debate during that period with his biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). The Muslim response was spearheaded by Sayyid Ahmad Khan (and those influenced by his

thoughts) who is often credited with introducing a 'Neo-Mutazilite spirit'—the catchword in the context of Muslim history for rationalism—to Islamic thought in South Asia. His critique of Hadith literature and methodology was a key component of his overall view of Islam as a rational religion capable of coping with the challenges posed by modernity. He was among the first modern Muslim scholars to express scepticism toward major portions of Hadith literature and critically question classical methods of Hadith criticism, but refrained from overtly criticizing the authority of the Prophet as a religious guide for the Muslims. In aspects of life other than religion, however, Sayyid Ahmad did introduce the belief of the Prophet's non-binding authority for he considered the Prophet a fallible human prone to error in worldly dealings. This attempt of Sayyid Ahmad's to limit the scope of Hadith and mitigate the Prophet's authority to religion alone has prompted some to designate him as the first of the *Munkir-i Hadith* (Denier of Hadith) and *Ahl al-Qur'an*.<sup>1</sup> This chapter traces the trajectory of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's religious ideas and his influence on Islamic Modernism in South Asia during the late nineteenth century, thus setting the precedence for the emergence of the *Ahl al-Qur'an* movements at the start of the twentieth century.

### 3.2. THE RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF SAYYID AHMAD KHAN UP TO 1870

Sayyid Ahmad Khan<sup>2</sup> is remembered as the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University which pioneered Western modes of education for the Muslims of South Asia. An equally important part of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's vision for the Muslim community was the idea of a fresh interpretation of different aspects of Islam in the light of new developments in the field of sciences and philosophy and the socio-economic and political changes impinging upon the lives of the Muslims. During the early stages of his career, however, Sayyid Ahmad was a self-proclaimed 'Wahabi' and espoused unqualified faith in the imitation of all the aspects of *Sunnat* to the exclusion of those practices or beliefs which are considered *bid'at* or innovation in the religion. The 'Wahabi' ideas of Sayyid Ahmad Khan about Islam—and especially about the Prophet, Hadith, and *Sunnat*—underwent considerable change during the later course of his life.

A transformation in Sayyid Ahmad's religious ideas from that of a self-proclaimed 'Wahabi' to a 'Neo-Mutazilite' bent upon opening new avenues of thought in the field of Muslim scholarship so as to make way for a rationalist interpretation of Islam came about gradually. But even

during the so-called Wahabi period of his life. Sayyid Ahmad never held ideas similar to those which had come to denigrate the Wahabīs as disrespectful to the Prophet or their militant extremism vis-à-vis British power. It may have been because of Sayyid Ahmad's upbringing and his family values where spiritual guides were greatly venerated. His father Mir Mirza Iqbal (1837) was somewhat of a recluse and was inclined to frequent the Sufi circles of Delhi. He is said to have been one of the chief disciples of a Delhi Sufi Shah Ghulam Ali. The same holds true for Sayyid Ahmad's mother. While the rest of her family were Shah Abdul Aziz's disciples, she alone among her relatives had great affection and reverence for Shah Ghulam Ali. This deep association with the Mawaddat branch of Naqshbandi Sufism accounts for Sayyid Ahmad's devotion to the Prophet and respect for Sunna in his later writings. Sayyid Ahmad, during this phase, seems to have held the belief that the essence of Islam is love for the Prophet and love for the Prophet will be reflected in following his Sunna.<sup>1</sup> His concern for imitating Sunna inevitably led him to search for the authentic sources of Sunna devoid of any later accretions. In other words he strongly stated the Wahabi concerns about *bid'at* (innovative practices) though his criteria in this regard were much more lax than those of his contemporaries. He did not tend himself to espousing an extremist attitude towards the social norms, customs and cultural practices of his times. This is clearly seen in many of the traits written by him early in his writing career.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's writing career started in 1842 with the publication of *Kitāb al-Qaṣṣa bi-Zayn al-Akram*. It was written as a contribution to the genre of *maḥabba* writing: a biography of Prophet to be recited at a *dar-i-iftā* gathering commemorating the birth of Prophet Muhammad (peace). In the process of *maḥabba* writing, Sayyid Ahmad was attracted to sketches filled with apocryphal stories and concocted tales and aimed to compose a short sketch of the Prophet's life devoid of all such details. At the same time he did not express doubt in supernatural occurrences in the life of his prophet but only chose to mention those incidents for which he could find a credible reference.<sup>2</sup> *Kaḥmāt al-Haq*, published in 1849, discussed the issue of relationship between a *pir* (a Sufi spiritual guide) and his *murīd* (disciple). In this tract Sayyid Ahmad opined that while it was permissible in Shari'at and in accordance with the Sunna to attach oneself to some learned, pious and virtuous person as a *murīd* in pursuit of his piety, especially in case of some great graves was encouraged and commendable in Shari'at. In another of his early works titled *Mawāzīn al-Iḥsan wa-Mawāzīn al-Sharīf* and published in 1850, Sayyid

Ahmad again stressed a middle course by maintaining a belief in the spiritual elevating influences of Sufism while at the same time rebutting any magical practices associated with it. His differences with the 'Wahabi' concept of *badat* was best reflected in *Rah-e-Sunnat aur Ra'id-e-Badat* published in 1850. In this tract, Sayyid Ahmad stated that many practices denounced as *badat* were in fact traceable to Sunnat. As a result Ahmad Khan was to recall in 1879 this tract was written at the height of noisy and contentious Wahabism, when dissimilar views regarding the stature of the Prophet were being expressed and demonstrated.<sup>1</sup> On the such occasion Sayyid Ahmad had an argument with his learned friend Maula Muhammad Ali Azimabadi of Delhi City, during which Sayyid Ahmad burnt out to assert his opinion that if a person does not eat a mango for the reason that the Prophet did not eat it, then the Angels will kiss his feet at his death because was at this juncture that Sayyid Ahmad had penned this tract.

At the period from 1857 to 1859, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's religious thought seems to have gone through a period of transition. During this phase he was more interested in analysing the role of Muslim as far as to Christianity and any social interaction with Christians. His concern with showing all unity between Islam and Christianity was greater because of his aim of bringing about a rapprochement between Muslims and the Christians. Just rather than any apparent attempt at accommodating Islam. This gap he tried to bridge by actively advocating unity to the British government and by writing tracts he highlighted the common grounds between Islam and Christianity. As part of these efforts he published a tract explaining the real meaning of the word *Shirk* in 1859. Revisionist Muslim had been persecuted for years to the term *Shirk* for Christians. This word was found to be derogatory by both the missionaries and the government. In order to save Sayyid Ahmad did not such argument by trying to establish that the word *Shirk* comes from the word *Shird* and it was with this cause that the Christians used to identify themselves during the time of the prophet. Another tract addressed the issue of whether it was permissible for the Muslims to dine with the Christians. *Abham-e-shirk aur And-e-kash* was published in 1865 and it is being substantiated with references from Quran, Hadith and logic to prove that such a practice is not only permissible in Islam but also desirable. In this tract he resorted to finding alternative interpretations in order to reconcile various Ahadith. As he could not attain to his desired objective of better social interaction between the Christians and the Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

In order to further mitigate Muslim apprehensions in their dealings with Christians – whether native Muslims or converts – Sayyid Ahmad Khan took up the gigantic project of writing the first (if not the only) Muslim commentary of the Bible in modern times to dispel mis-understandings prevalent among adherents of both religions regarding each other's religious doctrines. Writing a commentary of the Bible was by no means an easy task. In case of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, this task was made even more difficult due to his lack of expertise in classical and modern European languages. But he made up for his deficiencies in Latin, Hebrew and English by employing scholars well-versed in these languages<sup>1</sup> and with the presence of various missionary groups operating in North India, there was no dearth of literature on Christianity and Church history. What most of it was available in European languages, the rest had been translated into vernaculars and circulated across India. Sayyid Ahmad did not restrict himself to the translated works alone. With the help of his team of scholars, he made an effort to read and understand the Biblical texts in their original language. For this he had to invest a lot of his time, money and creative energy on this project – an extraordinary effort that is readily reflected in the book. Although incomplete (like his other books, including the biography of Prophet Muhammad (peace and Taqat of Quran), his work testifies to Sayyid Ahmad's credentials as a competent *Mufasss* interpreter with an erudite vast knowledge of ancient history, theology, geography, lexicography and other relevant exegetical sciences.

The first of the three volumes of his commentary on the Bible focuses exclusively on the authenticity of Bible's text and a comparison of Christian-Muslim views on this issue. According to Sayyid Ahmad, 'the Muslim believe the Bible to be a divinely inspired Book. But unlike the Quran, which is an authentic record of God's Words relayed through His Messenger, other Divine Books can only be regarded as the Message of God but not in His Own words. The Quran alone has the distinction of being the embodiment of Divine rubens and that too in the words of His Own Words. It is unanimously held view among Muslim scholars to which Sayyid Ahmad Khan too has adhered to. But he did not share common views on the origin of falsehoods in Biblical texts. Instead he offered a new Muslim perspective on the history of corruption of Biblical text according to which the mission of Jesus was to impress upon the hearts of his apostles the subject matter of the revelations received. These apostles were divinely inspired like many other non-Prophetic figures. It was left to these apostles to perpetrate in writing, the inspired truths in the idiom

and in the form of language they understood best, or with which they chanced to be most familiar." Even though these apostles were distinctly inspired, they, being mortal humans, were prone to commit errors. This is not to deny the efforts put in by the apostles from taking measures to prevent fabrications being made in the text of their Holy Books. These errors, said Sayyid Ahmad Khan, did not affect the main text and subject matter of Old and New Testaments. Only the tales and narratives to be found in these texts showed considerable differences.

The notion of a credible first authentic version of Old and New Testaments helped Sayyid Ahmad to account for the Quranic verse that repeated a salute to previous Divine messengers in order to convince the Christians and Jews of Arabs of the genuineness of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) claims. If there never was an authentic version of these Divine texts available, then why did the Quran insist on referring to it for claiming obedience from the People of the Book? In keeping Sayyid Ahmad's views on Old and New Testaments, this anomaly can easily be accounted for. It is because in Sayyid Ahmad's opinion, the Quranic word *lawh* (tablet) does not imply a large scale fabrication in Divine texts or deliberate omissions and additions made to it. His interpretation of the word *lawh* is that it refers to the potential of the human mind to write the previous Divine texts in to the wording of revised meanings and interpretations to different passages. It was to this lower grade of fabrication that other Holy Books were subjected to. According to Sayyid Ahmad, it was against these practices of the Jewish Rabbis and Christian Priests that the Quran had expressed its displeasure on.

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's stance can not also be seen as a conscious and social interaction with Christianity that made him a controversial figure. As in *Jamia*, are to be found instances of Sayyid Ahmad's Naturalist vision of religion, where he declares that in the work of God and revelation His word that no discrepancy should ever occur between them for as much as both proceed from the same Source.<sup>16</sup> This early attack of Naturalism in Sayyid Ahmad's religious ideas is clearly reflected in his deviant views on Satan. He does not believe Satan to have a real existence other than that of an embodiment of an idea of evil ingrained in human nature. And he has convinced himself to believe in the very Copernican world-view he had denied in favour of Ptolemaic world-view in one of his earlier tracts *Qaul-i-Matin* published in 1848.<sup>17</sup>

There cannot possibly be a cut off date after which Sayyid Ahmad started writing up about themes relating to his modernistic interpretation of Islam. But what seems to be absolutely significant is the impact of

missionaries and Orientalists to whose ideas Sayyid Ahmad was exposed for a long period of time. He was personally friends with leading Orientalists like Sprenger and Muir, and his presence in Agra had made him aware of Christian-Muslim polemics taking place in that city. He also took a keen interest in the academic output of Delhi College established by the British government to disseminate Western sciences among the people of North India.<sup>14</sup> In order to measure the impact of Orientalists' Missionary activities and writings on Sayyid Ahmad's religious outlook and ideas regarding Hadith and Sunnah, reference should be made to William Muir's controversial book on the life of Prophet Muhammad (1891). It was in response to Muir's book that Sayyid Ahmad was forced to radically revise his own religious views, mainly on Hadith and also on other aspects of the broad paradigm. This new trend in Sayyid Ahmad's religious outlook, for which immediate impetus came from Muir, lasted till his death (1898). During this period he developed a critical framework of inquiry whereby he could project his own rationalist version of Islam, defend Islam and the Prophet from Orientalist-Missionary writings and cases on any such authoritative works of Islamic scholarship that impeded him from espousing his religious ideas.

### 3.3. WILLIAM MUIR (1819-1905) AND HIS 'AUTHENTIC' BIOGRAPHY OF THE PROPHET

William Muir's biography of Prophet Muhammad (1891) has had a deep influence on the shaping of Western scholarship on Islam and the Prophet. There were numerous other Western scholars as well as Muslims who wrote on Islam and the Prophet and were critical of Islam. Muir's Biography on the other works gave rise to as much controversy and given such fierce responses from Muslim scholars as Muir's work did. The root cause of this controversy is not to be found solely in the details of the Prophetic life as narrated by Muir. It is because Muir like his contemporary, was equally prone to the influence of medieval Christian ideas denouncing Islam as an evil religion and its founder as a false Prophet of immoral character. His biography is not only more contemporary — an other Orientalist scholarship on this subject — in estimating the Prophet's life, character and teachings. What differentiates him, however, from the rest, is his contribution to a scholarly approach, based upon the techniques of western historiography with which he approached the study of the Prophet's life. The cornerstones of this approach lies in Muir's claim of basing his study on *authentic and original*



sources of Muslim history and religion. With access to hitherto unavailable or rare primary sources, Muir could boast of having knowledge about the real essence of Islam which even the Muslims would find impossible to dispute since it would be based upon those very sources that were held in reverence by the Islamic scholars themselves.

In order to have a proper understanding of Muir's approach to the historiography of Islam and its critical analysis, it is important to know more about events and persons that had an effect in giving shape to Muir's designing of such a framework of inquiry.

Muir was educated in the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow, later he joined the Hulsebury College and, in 1835, arrived in India as member of the Indian Civil Service. He served in several places and at different ranks and ultimately became the lieutenant-governor of the important North-West Province before retiring from his official position in 1876. Deeply steeped in the British historical tradition, Muir was greatly influenced by his training at Hulsebury College. Muir's worldview was affected by the ideal of cultural and racial superiority. This combined with his strong faith in Christianity and a strong sense of civilizational Christianity, a mission for the people of South Asia, does not really harbor a prior idea of non-official activity as a government policy in India. But he did favour the idea of British officials working and serving their religion in their personal, non-official capacity.<sup>19</sup> In his mind, this did by associating himself with the Evangelical mission and its activities in India.<sup>20</sup>

During his posting at Agra in the early 1840s, Muir became close friends with Pender, 1801-58, who was one of the leading missionary figures in South Asia and beyond, with a reputation of being a convert to Islam.<sup>21</sup> Muir had travelled extensively in Muslim areas especially in India. He was once attached to a Christian Mission in Russian Caucasus from where he was able to make short-lived excursions to Imperial Muslim centres like Baghdad, Stambul and Shiraz. This influenced his views about Muslim civilization and the Evangelical missionary methods he later adopted in India. His most important contribution to Christian-Muslim polemics was *Muslims and Zulus*. The original Persian text was published in 1835 and an Urdu translation made available in 1843—five years after he had the joined the Indian Mission. In his book, Pender, instead of essentializing Islam as evil or a heresy, adopted a comparative approach to demonstrate how Islamic variant of Christianity and the standard ecclesiastical view of its ideas and spiritual teachings

It was Pfander who first raised upon Musr the need for a biography of the Prophet in a vernacular language so that the missionary viewpoint could reach out to a wide audience. Although there were many biographies of Prophet Muhammad (some available with a Christian or an Orientalist perspective of his life) they were all in European languages and hence did not serve the missionary purpose well. These biographies were also typically reflective of medieval times against Islam, or presented an idealised heroic portrayal of the Prophet's life as if he had come. Musr himself was not satisfied with the recent attempts made by European scholars in this regard. He found fault with both Sprenger and Washington (it gives account of the Prophet's life in his article titled *Biography of Muhammad for India*). Musr was even more critical of the burgeoning volume of Muslim writings on their Prophet. The vernacular press reports which passed through his hands made him aware of a new trend of enhanced focus in local Urdu journalism on the life of the Prophet.<sup>11</sup> This new movement was entirely alien to him. In Musr's view, reflected mainly in a religious imagination, and was thus as formidable as ridiculous beyond belief. In this category were to be considered, not only recently published *Musnad Musr*, written in his own Urdu Imam Shafiq's *Ma'arif* which narrates events in the Agra courts, but also late Persian biographies like *Muhammadiyah* of Nuhwan and *Kanz al-Arab* (they had been compiled in South Asia during the Mughal period and were often by being brought out in new lithographed editions in the Urdu presses of North India). The fact that several editions of *Musnad Musr* had come out within a few years of its publication showed that the native mind was not insensitive to the subject of the Prophet's life.<sup>12</sup> The time was ripe for new biographies of the Prophet based on primary texts of Muslim history to prove to the Muslims that they were deceived on many important points, and thus demonstrate that some of their stances were wrong.

It is said Musr to write *Life of Mahomet* which was first published in complete form in 1871.<sup>13</sup> But as Goll rightly points out, this book was more than just a biography of the Prophet. In any instance it was a learned treatise on biography and devoted to questioning Islamic perceptions as a divinely inspired religion by articulating it with Western methods of historical biographies.<sup>14</sup> It was to be expected of a biography written specifically for missionary purposes. At such an comparative study of religious virtues of Islam and Christianity within the framework of the Prophet's life and teachings called for Musr's pre-occupied conviction of the superiority of the latter over the former. Such a belief was, of staunch Evangelists like Musr, a matter of their faith and

its rhetorical assertion would not have failed to register an impact on his writing. There was a need to lend credibility to what Muir planned to present as the *true* version of the Prophet's life and his teachings. This he achieved by the application of Western tools of analysis to the historiography of Islamic history and the Prophet's biography—an *approach* that has earned him recognition in the annals of Orientalist approaches to Islamic studies. It was designed intentionally with the aim of acquiring an *authority* to write a *true* account of Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) life. Once this *authority* could be claimed on the basis of access to *original* and *authentic* works of histories and Ahadith *authenticated* by Muir in the introductory essay of his book, Muir thought that he could, without fear, confront his Muslim adversaries with an array of hostile weapons drawn from his own armories.<sup>10</sup> This would allow him to find faults or contradictions in traditionally narrated accounts of Prophet's life and, most importantly, to subtly satirise various aspects of his private life. Only in this way could it have been possible to show the intelligent and thinking 'Muslim medians' the historical evidences of their faith and its lacunae as compared with Christianity. A biography devoid of these features could neither have added anything new to the expanding volume of books on the Prophet of Islam nor could it have aided the missionary purpose in any significant positive way. It was to his manipulation of *original* sources that Muslim apologetic response had to focus in order to pose a counter argument.

### 3.4. THE 'GREAT DEBATE' OF AGRA AND THE WORKS OF ALOIS SPRENGER (1813–1893)

At the time Muir was planning and researching for the biography of the Prophet, his work seemed to have been affected by the political, rhetorical and academic environment of North India in the face of high-pitched Christian-Muslim debate. Muir's belief in the need for a new *approach* to Islamic studies was reinforced even further. Not only was such an *approach* desirable but it also appeared possible to execute due to the progress that was being made in the field of Islamic studies. These developments were sure to have an effect on Muir's own scholarship and religious ideas.

Pfanders' presence in India had brought him into contact and debate with his Muslim counterparts. The missionary zeal and Muslim-Christian polemics that ensued reached its zenith in the 'Great Debate' in Agra in 1854.<sup>11</sup> Muir had the chance to be present at that occasion and to monitor the proceedings as they unfolded. Even before the *grand finale* at Agra,



Alwin Sprenger (1814-1893) had preceded Muir in writing a biography of Prophet Muhammad (1840). In many ways he had more of a claim to having an access to both authentic and original primary sources. It was because of his time spent at the Dhaka College which brought him into contact with the circle of Muslim Intellectuals of North India.<sup>42</sup> He was able to become easily published books and manuscripts from their private collections. In addition to that, Sprenger had had a chance to work in the royal libraries at Lucknow and to draft a list of their holdings. In 1854, he took long leave and went on to tour Iraq, Syria, Arabia, Egypt and was able to return with valuable books on various aspects of Muslim history and religion which he later got published in India.<sup>43</sup> It is no wonder then that Muir had to be dependent on Sprenger for many rare manuscripts and books. But given Muir's own status as a high ranking official, it was not difficult for him to establish personal contacts with Muslim Intellectuals and procure the necessary material for the writing of his works of scholarship, especially, however, both Muir and Sprenger were equally learned in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu.

Sprenger had written two different biographies of Prophet Muhammad (1840). The first was written in English and published from Aligarh in 1851.<sup>44</sup> Years later appeared his much-detailed study of Muhammad's entire life in German. In his criticism Muir focused on *Das Leben und die Lehre des Muhammed*. It was because *Life of Muhammad* compared to Sprenger's later work was bold and meagre, and also incomplete as it stopped short at the flight from Mecca.<sup>45</sup> Muir's criticism was not to review this treatise as a whole, but simply the essay prefixed to the first volume in which the nature and value of the materials for the life of Muhammad, and especially of Tradition, are discussed.<sup>46</sup> In this part of his book Sprenger has discussed a large number of sources and research material bearing relevance to the study of Muhammad's life and his Prey, but He considers this material as follows: (1) as Biographies of the Prophet, (2) as Sunna (Conversations on Quran), (3) as chronology, and (4) Original Documents copied by the collectors of tradition.<sup>47</sup>

Sprenger and Muir had different views regarding the relative importance of Hadith and Sunna biographies of the Prophet. Sprenger, though Sprenger himself was responsible for making possible the reprints of the old, classical works of Arab history and Arab literature and was undoubtedly responsible for them as reference works, he did not consider them as much importance as Hadith. In his critical review, sources of the Prophet's biography, he concluded that the Sunna is not as much authentic as Hadith, the biography is more false and "unauthentic". It was

because Springer was generally more appreciative of the efforts made by the collectors of Hadith. But it does not mean that he approved of their canons of criticism or found them reasonable.<sup>4</sup> At best, the Traditionists stuck to their guns and tolerated them stringently. This could not be expected of the Biographers. These views appeared to Muir erroneous and misleading. He was willing to give more credit to the Biographers. It was because, in Muir's opinion, they were comparatively free from the biased motives and ideological constraints of the Traditionists. The *positive* critical criteria laid down by the Traditionists did not apply to the Biographers and so they were able to record interesting narratives and valuable clues to truth which the professional Collector could make use of, if they did not answer to the technical requirements of traditional evidence, or square with his own theological notions.<sup>5</sup> Even though they tried to paint a glorified picture of the Prophet, there is no reason to doubt that otherwise they might honestly give a true picture of the Prophet.<sup>6</sup> As for the existence of legendary tales, both Hadith and Biographies suffered from same disease, hence leaving it to choose between the two.<sup>7</sup>

With access to early Muslim historiographical material and required expertise in Islamic languages, Muir turned to approach the subject of his enquiry with an impartial mind. It was this purportedly balanced approach to the life of the Prophet, based upon the earliest and most *authentic* historical sources which differentiated Muir's work from that of the rest of his contemporaries. Or at least, that was what his admirers—mostly priests and Europeans whose belief, as expressed in a review of his book, as part of an obituary for Muir, published in 1905, it was the author, always strives to be just and fair, anyone who has read the 37th chapter dealing with the character of the Prophet, must be convinced of this.<sup>8</sup> For the present study, however, the focus would not be on Muir's overall view of Prophet, it would rather move on the crucial question of his handling of sources of Prophet Muhammad's birth, biography and the canons of criticism that he formulated.

### 3.5. MUIR'S *QUELLENKRITIK*

Muir's emphasis on the need for *authentic* sources naturally led him to begin his book with a detailed review of different Muslim texts which he regarded as potential sources for a biography of Prophet Muhammad (pb. sh.) and the degree of *authenticity* to which these sources could be said to be entitled. He lists the Quran and Hadith as the two main sources

from which to draw material for tracing the life of the Prophet, in his discussion of the reliability of the Quranic text. Muir expresses the view that every verse in the Quran is the genuine and unaltered composition of Muhammad himself.<sup>11</sup> The editions of the Quran compiled during the reigns of Abu Bakr and Uman were complete and there were no intentional omissions on the part of the compilers. Ironically, among other arguments, one of the reasons for which Muir took the Quran to be an authentic record of the Prophet's teachings, is the fragmentary nature of its text. Had it been a forgery, it would have been better edited and composed. For Muir, incredible as it is that a text has been so faithfully preserved by the Prophet's since a first generation in towns and similar diligence has been observed in publishing a version without the possibility of slightest use of errors. I cannot account for anything miraculous or divine. Because the text of the Quran is found by him to be contradictory, repetitive, and often filled with superfluous legends and apocryphal stories, what actually makes it questionable, for Muir as an authentic text is the fact of its being written as though it were a patchwork of unrelated fragments placed in juxtaposition to each other.<sup>12</sup> Even his praise for Muslim efforts in preserving the text of the Quran is not without suggestive hints of casting the onus of tampering with the text lies not with those who were entrusted with the charge of preserving it, but on the author himself. It was the Prophet himself who during his lifetime made several changes in the text. A number of *ayat* were subsequently changed or withdrawn altogether. For this he finds evidence from within the Quran itself by referring to verse 2:177 which has been used by Muslim scholars ever since to cite evidence in favour of *hadith* abrogation within the Quran.<sup>13</sup> For his matter there are a number of traditions to be found within the authentic *Hadith* collections as well. Such changes, were made by political or other expedients and should not have been recorded. This implies that even if something has gone missing from the Quranic text it is not due to the fault of the author or followers. They did, in the best of their abilities, preserve the Quran 'as it was left by Muhammad'. This served Muir's purpose well. Alterations in Biblical text *often as they were at first* (p. 11) Pfander were made since the death of Jesus when the text was put together. But in case of Quran the adulteration has been done by no one other than the Prophet himself who claimed to have received this *ayat* as Divine revelation. The same *ayat* could be easily drawn Jesus's genuine teachings as expressed in the Bible and completed after his death underwent superficial changes during the course of time while that of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) were subject to

changes and modifications during his own lifetime though follows did not to preserve what even was left for them by their Grandmaster.

It is worth, however, as the best guide to the life of the Prophet is recognized by Muir. For him, the Qur'an is groundwork and the rest of all inquiries into the origin of Islam and the character of its founder.<sup>24</sup> In this view he claims to have been following the traditionally held Muslim view based upon a tradition narrated by 'A'isha, the Prophet's wife, that Prophet Muhammad's "real character is the Qur'an" (Hence,

the Qur'an is not just an embodiment of the Prophet's moral character and teachings but also the most authentic historical document outlining the main details of his life. At the same time Muir was cognizant of the fact that unlike the Bible the Qur'an does not cover details of even the important events of the Prophet's life, let alone furnishing a full narrative of his life. For this, one needs to refer to Hadith literature in search of all more information regarding various incidents covering the life of the Prophet.

Muir did accept Hadith as the most important source for the Prophet's biography but he did not share the erroneous, in his view of many other Orientalists who saw among the writings of the Muslim scholars hadith literature as an accurate view of Hadith literature. In his study of Hadith and its history, Muir was concerned about the need to prove its late growth and hence the need to adopt a certain method of scrutinizing the Hadith material, to be able to sift genuine traditions from a vast pool of both authentic and unauthentic traditions. In doing so, Muir did not refer to classical Muslim works on Hadith, based upon the criteria of the chain of transmission and contrives to formulate his own criteria. "Thus Muslim who are up on Hadith cannot do anything for Muir. His main thrust is on *modern* content criticism. In that sense he fails to show much acquaintance with the works done by Muslim traditionalists with regard to the grades of authenticity as for different Hadith collections and methodology, a framework laid down by them. It was because Muir was not concerned about the ideological relevance of Hadith, not only in the sense as a historical source, but as a Springer. Muir's work, then, was based largely on Hadith and both felt the need for discriminating between 'reliable' and 'unreliable' traditions in the light of modern criteria that they designed themselves. In Muir's view, what mattered to him was to prove that the traditions contained a large element of Islamic truth and to show how it corresponded with recent points of the Prophet's teachings in the Qur'an.



Muir defines *Hadith* as 'consisting of the sayings of the friends and followers of the prophet, handed down by a chain of supposed chains of narrators to the period when they were collected, recorded and compiled'.<sup>48</sup> As for the origin and history of *Hadith*, Muir accepts the traditional view of Prophet's followers after his death. Nothing could have been more interesting for early Muslims than a conversation or the actual sayings of their Prophet. Muir's account of the origins of *Hadith* is rivaled through his attempt to portray and equate the practice of *Hadith* narrations as some sort of a convenient medium for the members of a tribe and sect but always accumulating from one campaign to the other.<sup>49</sup>

As I have explained earlier, the Arabian Peninsula embraced within its fold rounded tribal centres in Mecca, Medina and Damascus, a need was felt for a more elaborate system of law applicable to the Quran alone had been deemed insufficient to guide the Muslims. But with expanding frontiers of the Muslim empire, a need for a written *Hadith* methodology arose. The Quran with the simplicity of its text was unarguably the result kept in the face of numerous instances for which its provision had been made in the pages of the Holy Book. Hence, this deficiency was to be resolved by adopting the *Sunnat* of the Prophet as supplementary to Quran. Tradition was now invested with a Divine Authority and brought on par with *Wahy* revealed from God's revelations. The gathering and collecting of the sayings and actions of a prophet attributed to the Prophet. A new class of professional *Hadith* collectors cropped up who traveled extensively through the vast stretches of Muslim empire in search of traditions. They also established their schools imparting Traditions. People would take note from the lectures of their masters and learn about the strings of *Hadith* being a homily on which rested their *Hadith* reports. If a corrupter were introduced and exposed. These elaborate arrangements paved a way for the preservation and spread, at least a half a century of *Hadith* collection. The chain of narrators remained unrecorded till several centuries after the first century following Prophet Muhammad's (peace) death.

At this point, Muir's evaluation of the study of *Hadith* becomes significant. He does not deny the possibility of some early record of *Hadith* from which later ones may have been copied. But, he believes such records must have been rare, if at all exist, and none of them have survived to this date with any traceable evidence. While a vast pool of oral traditions had come to a wider circulation, it could not have projected itself to the effects of the political war among pagans, Muslim polity

at the time. As the traditions were being handed down orally and rested on the authority of memory alone, their carriers could not have ignored the influence of their personal proclivities, political convictions, and prejudices. Such a problem was even more pronounced during the Abbasid period which coincided with the golden period of Hadith studies as all the six authentic collections of Hadith were compiled during this time. In the Umayyad-Abbasid power struggle, it was important for both sides to cite their legitimate right to power on the basis of their close proximity to Prophet or on the basis of any tradition that extolled their virtues and belittled that of their adversaries. Not even Sīra literature was spared from instrumentalism as seen in Ibn Ishāq's biography of Prophet Muhammad (revised) compiled under the auspices of Abbasid Caliph— which lauds the Abbasid ancestry and stigmatises that of Umayyads.<sup>41</sup> Hence, in Muir's assessment, there appears to be a causal connection between the political events of the first hundred years of Muslim history and the possible fabrication or distortion of traditions.<sup>42</sup>

Muir is not wholly sure, precise of the tremendous efforts made by the traditionists. Much that they did is found by him as resulting from sheer devotion and sincerity to scrupulously recording the sayings of their Prophet. What he finds fault with or problematic is the so-called authenticating the Isnad system.<sup>43</sup> It is because the Isnad system concerned such solely with the assessment of the narrators of a tradition and not with the contents or subject matter of a tradition. Lack of a critical system of enquiry was, according to Muir, in line with the spirit of Islam which would not brook free inquiry and real criticism.<sup>44</sup> Even if there was some help offered by the Isnad system in detecting the growth of fabricated Hadith, it could only have been able to identify recent fabrications without being effective in placing the earlier traditions upon any certain basis.<sup>45</sup> In the absence of such a framework of enquiry, Muir proceeded to chalk out a scheme of his own, whereby Hadith were to be ascertained by placing them and their narrators in a real historical context and, along with their narrators, judged in accordance with the principles laid down by him.

In order to achieve this target of separating true from the false in Tradition, Muir proposed to address certain questions. It is repeated *questionnaire* which to find the level of trustworthiness of the narrator and the extent to which he was possibly influenced by or devoted to persons, interests and propaganda. He also wants to know whether the narrator could possibly have had the opportunity of knowing the facts personally. Muir answers these questions by considering the period in which a

narration relates and then the Subjects of which it treats.<sup>36</sup> Muir first takes up the period to which a particular Hadith refers to and checks the possibility of availability of a bipartisan reporting of that period or different events. For example, he finds Hadith accounts regarding Prophet Muhammad's *travels*, years preceding his Prophethood, and initial years after the Prophethood and subsequent persecution at the hands of the Meccans, so he finds His foremost objection is centred upon the post-war approach of the authors and compilers of these narrations. Since all the leading opponents of the Prophet among the chiefs of Arabia were dead, no one was left to tell the other version of the story. What can then be gathered from Hadith is essentially a Muslim account of events because all of Prophet's erstwhile opponents had become his allies. These newly converted Meccan Muslims could not have afforded to set the record straight as it could have been politically inexpedient. No one could have dared to speak in favour of people like Abu Sufyan and Abu Lahab. What was even more unbecoming for neutrality in historical accounts was the sword of Umar brandished over the neck of a heinous offender.<sup>37</sup> The same rule applies to all other opponents of Prophet Muhammad (peace) as well with whom he had his disagreements or battles, whether they were Christian, Jews or hypocrites of Medina. For these reasons, Muir finds no way to impartially verify the Muslim claims of these persecution or the extent of the atrocities inflicted upon them by the Pagans of Mecca. It is because these events have been related by those who could not possibly have set aside their biases in recording them for historical preservation.

Similarly, Muir has his reservations about the veracity of the reported events of the Prophet's childhood or the years preceding his Prophethood. The Prophet was too young, as child so be known to wider Meccan population. None of the reports about his early years were narrated by those who were personally acquainted with him during those years. Few, if any, of his companions were born before him. Majority of his followers were younger to him and could not have possessed personal knowledge or first-hand account of events during his formative years.<sup>38</sup> However, Muir does accept details regarding the Prophet's early background as being worthy of trust.

Muir offers a more detailed view of his ideas about the possibility of self-interest propelling, or selfish motives on the part of narrators in promoting certain Aḥādith. This he has discussed under the heading of Subject Matter of the Aḥādith and has linked it to the second part of his *revised questionnaire*.<sup>39</sup> He cites a number of reasons and examples to show the possibility of deliberate alterations in Hadith by making

omissions, additions or exaggerations. It is conceivable, for instance, it was considered appropriate to a certain degree to mention the two rivers Tradition as a desired way of showing intimate company of the Prophet. Under the same heading Muir includes those reports in which narrators had made exaggerated claims of their roots and services rendered for Islam. What holds true for the source's efforts to purport of himself as the right sort of companions of the Prophet is equally applicable to the respective factions to whom they may have belonged or had some working or close affiliations. It may could not have been avoided because such affinities ran so high and were deep-rooted among the Arabs.

On the issue of miracles attributed to the Prophet and turned a great length into the other direction, Muir is consistently concerned there all as attempts to glorify Muhammad and to invest him with supernatural abilities. He says of our material in that respect that the possibility of occurrence of miracles. As a devout Christian he believed in the possibility of miracles. But he has returned a series of references found in Prophet Muir pointed out to be false in the *Qur'an* and in the *Hadith*. One reason for this was his strong belief that he did not, according to which Prophet Muir had been a great prophet and he had been invested with great powers of performing miracles. The inclusion of miracle-related *Hadith* is possibly for its contradiction with clear Islamic sources. Muir's view was a consequence of the main argument which according to Muir, Prophet Muhammad was a prophet who should be regarded as a prophet who was even more than a prophet and link that Prophet Muhammad to the other side of the Islamic Arabian peninsula to the prophet was a help make Muhammad's supremacy claims over Judaism and Christianity. Further, his position came in Muir's mind to the Prophet Muhammad it was essential to challenge Jews and Christians with the scriptures that Scriptures, traditions which also doubts about these scriptures are also derived from by Muir because in his repeated examination of *Qur'an* he had been unable to discover any grounds for believing that Muhammad himself ever expressed a doubt in regard either to the authority or the genuineness of the *Qur'an*. New Testament as exact in his time. But the lack of any Prophet, an oral Arabian prophet with Abraham, according to his view, an Arabian was at a disadvantage to the recovery of original texts or Jews and Christians collected traditions from oral sources. He believed found ready acceptance.

After pointing out serious lacunae in the *Hadith* literature Muir then proceeds to give his own criteria for judging and weighing the

authenticity level of various Hadith. Two of his principles of Hadith evaluation are worth of discussion. First he gives what he calls "a tradition as a Hadith which agrees with the actions of Prophet Muhammad (adorned) contents of Prophetic life that have spread among even non-Muslims like Qur'an." But at the same time he is cautious not to be convinced in accepting the Hadith without any reservations. This is because Qur'anic reference may itself have been subject to falsifying due to a false tradition.<sup>11</sup> His second (positive and more conservative) principle gives precedence to a tradition which "from the *biographical point of view* would refer undeniably on to the Prophet." What makes this principle valid for Muir is his awareness of contemporary Muslim tradition as a source harboring sources that did not all witness or dissent or freehanking.

Muir's failure to establish an assessment of the critical valuation of Hadith earned out by Muir's scholars. He himself strongly there reasons of criticism as being false and thereby what caused the negative reaction is a historical view of an historical source for its primary quality.

It is not failure of Muir to build up a criticism on any firm basis with support from any of the classical works of Hadith is matched by his overcautious approach to accepting the historical accounts recorded by early biographers of Prophet Muhammad (muhammad) and his many early biographers and historians as one provided trustworthy sources. They included Ibn Is'haq, Ibn al-Sayid, Waqf al-Sayid, Ibn Sa'ad and Tabari. Not only were they who are but also lived during the period closer to his actions and events of Muhammad's life and he was well in a better position to ascertain the historical accounts and traditions and the events to which they were related. At the later historians carried on a distance from him and were filled with all sorts of legends and tales. In fact the authentic material relating to the Prophet's life was already publicly knowledge by the time of the biographers and historians appeared on the scene. The late day historians therefore could not have had the possibility of adding a single source of original information.

Muir was willing to accept the reports about the childhood of these historians without much scepticism and with great naivety. In case of history and he followed the traditionalist's method of having the authenticity of the reliability of his narrative. August Meier (1870-1900) and others, while Muir devoted so much time to their researching, Hadith becomes relevant for him in case of the early historians only when they narrate tales of supernatural acts and their "biographical details" of strange and compelling information that could have possibly harmed the image of the religion. A clear example of this approach can be seen in Muir's

appreciation of Ibn Hisham's work except when he *deliberately* skips *Qisas al-Anbiya*<sup>31</sup> even though Ibn Ishaq—on whose work Ibn Hisham's biography is professionally based upon—had clearly mentioned the incident. This can be seen in the works of the other two important historians Waqid and Tabari who have reported this incident on the authority of Ibn Ishaq. As Ibn Hisham had deliberately omitted all reference to so important a narrative, for no other reason apparently than because he feared it to be detrimental to the Prophet, cannot but lessen our confidence generally in his book.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, in case of Waqid, Muir does acknowledge Ibn al-A'ifi's criticism but still Muir thinks that "there is not the slightest ground for doubting that his character is equal, if not superior, to that of any other historian of his time."<sup>33</sup> This is in stark contrast with Muir's perception of the weakness of textual rule of 'respectable names' used by the Collectors.

Hence Muir himself extensively cites early historians even though they may fail to overcome the short comings that Muir had identified while discussing Hadith literature. In fact, the historians did not have a stringent criterion with regard to traditions as was the case with the Traditionists. For Muir, this laxity of rules was the very reason for which a historian of a prophet Muhammad's (peace) could know more details about his life even those which could possibly have been concealed by the Traditionists as a result of their biased approach. This should not lead to a conclusion that Muir clearly preferred early biographies over Hadith, and attempts to strike a balance between the two sources. In his opinion, a judicious historian would confine himself to the early biographies of Ibn Hisham, Waqid and his secretary, and Tabari and will also refer with a certain respect, such traditions in the general Collections of the earlier Traditionists—Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi, and others—as may bear upon his subject.<sup>34</sup> Thus—in addition to the statement he made while criticising Sprenger's evaluation of biographical sources—clearly indicates his preference and willingness to count more apostolical and than the Traditionists for his *authentic and original* biography of the Prophet.

With every care in the primary or Quranic text and importance of controversial Hadith allegedly marginalising Prophet Muhammad's (peace) character, Muir however has aim of exploring some controversial aspects of his life. The most important of these incidents to select in Muir's biography relate to *Qisas al-Anbiya* and his description of Prophet's marriages with Zainab and Maria the Egyptian. *Qisas al-Anbiya* (Story of the Prophets) or the incident of the so-called "Satanic Verses"<sup>35</sup> cannot be

directly supported on the basis of the Quran and (and unless supplemented with evidence from Hadith and early biographies). By showing that his incident was true and founded on the basis of this evidence, Muir—who working within his framework of research (qiyas) whose purpose is to show the allegedly false and satanic nature of Prophethood cannot be proved in a better manner than his incident. It also proves the fact that there have been instances of abrogation in the Quran and that too endorsed by the Prophet himself to rectify a grievous error that he had made. Secondly, it reiterates the importance that Muir gives to controversial Ahadith like these. He finds it responsible to conceive how the tale if not founded in truth, could ever have been invented.<sup>10</sup> and from the authorities (on whom he expressed much regard in his criticism of Hadith literature, are too strong to be counted as false.

Whereas the Quran hints about *Qism Gharaniq* may be disputed among the Muslim scholars, apart regarding a situation in Prophet's personal marital life are clear and even decisive. The Quran does not mention any specific version by sources of Hadith on how women Muir finds them true as lies in his estimation, malign the Prophet and hence in the light of the Quran and down by him, could not possibly have been a lowered a wide circulation had they been untrue. In addition to that, he finds a number of references in classical Arab histories that are favourable to the claims made by him. The Prophet's marriage to Zainab, the wife of his adopted son Zaid, has been a subject of great controversy, as has been a fact in Prophet Muhammad's (pb) household due to his inclination towards his adopted wife Maria (here incidents have been narrated in proper lengths in a chronicle Hadith collections and classical Arab histories. Since these incidents are considered to be morally questionable by some may Muslims themselves Muir—a descendant of his own methodology for the study of the Prophet's biography—finds their reports and the details therein as true and authentic. He narrates these incidents by quoting mostly from Tabari. In doing so, his subtle use of language further emphasises the details of what he considers a *maudhu'at* even in the Prophet's *harem*.<sup>11</sup> Muir's narration of these incidents describes the Prophet's chance encounter with Zainab during which the beauties of her figure were accidentally unveiled before the luminous gaze of Muhammad.<sup>12</sup> Zainab became aware of the same she had noticed and was ever proud of her figure. When Zaid came to know of his marriage, he was easily persuaded to divorce his wife and offer her to the Prophet for marriage. Prophet Muhammad (pb) initially reluctant to accept the offer, paid heed to Divine sanction for the marriage. He fulfilled the Divine behest,

and took Zainab *sai* to his bed.<sup>106</sup> Another crisis in his domestic life erupted because of Prophet's ill-treatment with his wife Maria which incensed his other wives especially Hafsa and A'isha. In order to defuse this crisis, Muhammad produced a message from Heaven as he had done in the case of Zainab.<sup>107</sup> There are several passages in Qur'anic chapter of *Al-furqan* dealing with this situation. The most relevant one, as narrated by Muslim reads as: 'The Prophet had consulted as a secret in one of his wives a certain affair, and when she disclosed it to him, he and God made known the same to others, he acquainted her with a part she told and withheld a part'.<sup>108</sup>

The verse does not disclose the nature of the secret nor does it disclose the names of those who were involved in this wife affair. Here Muslim's methodology allows him to turn to second most authentic source – the Hadiths – for an answer. Unfortunately, those Hadiths that are deemed *chauthat* by the Muslims when they are narrated by a list of their Prophet's companions is how Muslim is able to fill out the details of the incident in the light of his preference for *ahad* and *chauthat* Hadiths. Muslim made several other allegations regarding the Prophet's moral behaviour on several occasions – for his immoral liaisons and alleged atrocities against his own wives – but the evidence made above helps illustrate Muslim's methodology which had to be disputed and refuted by Muslim counter-arguments. For example, the fact why Muslim scholars rejected a methodological framework of their own in order to counter Muslim tactics. At best, Muslims could have argued that about Muslim's deliberate omission of some available evidence to the subject and aspects of his life and of manipulating his language to make the details of certain incidents appear more as universal and objective. But they could not have successfully exposed the historical and ideological reasons how he drew upon his biography of the Prophet – his was because Muslim had used *authentic* sources to describe the Prophet in the details of his life and teachings instead of counting on a superficial tales of 'Narrative' and 'moral' drawn from medieval Persian histories.

It was then left for Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his contemporaries to come up with a *quellenkritik* of their own in order to evolve a historiographical framework to question the Muslim past whereby certain aspects could be re-examined, omitted or most importantly subject to re-interpretation. Muslim's *authenticity* could only be challenged by a counter approach to the historiography of Islamic sources. The most important and difficult part of this fresh perspective was to be its dealing with the designing of new rules with which to carry out a more analysis of



several *questionable* Ahadith. This whole new trend may have started initially as a means to counter an allegation made by Orientalists like Muir, but in case of Sayyid Ahmad Khan it became a life-long mission and expanded further to a commitment with its ambitious effort to craft out a modernist or 'interpretation of Islam'.

### 3.6. SAYYID AHMAD KHAN'S REJOINDER TO WILLIAM MUIR

Muir's book was published in parts between 1858 and 1861 but Sayyid Ahmad Khan did not seem to have noticed it then and he started responding to its contents later in that decade. It may well be because of Sayyid Ahmad's lack of proficiency in English that hindered him from acquiring a firsthand knowledge about his book and its contents. Nevertheless, his immediate reaction after *reading* the book was that of disappointment and dislike. The book's treatment of the Prophet and his approach adopted by a scholar like Muir, in the name of the Prophet, As a devout Muslim he took up the task of writing a rejoinder to Muir's book with a deep sense of religious obligation. In 1869 he was appointed by the British colonial government in India as a lecturer in Urdu at the Aligarh Muslim College. Sayyid Ahmad Khan made best use of his seventeen months stay in England, between May 1869 and October 1870, by spending most of his time in the collection of research material for his book. Not only was the whole experience tiring and time-consuming, but very costly as well. Sayyid Ahmad had to incur the services of many translators to help him with the content of books in classical and modern European languages. He had to pay large amounts for rare books and manuscripts. Some had to be ordered from France, Germany and Egypt. The cost was so high for Sayyid Ahmad to bear alone. In many of his letters from abroad, therefore, he requested his friends for financial aid to help him to set up a library in his own house to use as a reference for the preparation and publication of his proposed book on the Prophet. The reason Sayyid Ahmad was taking so much pains for his book, even before it was expressed in a letter he wrote to Mirza Asif Khan that he was "able to purchase this work of mine, I would consider my coming to London as equivalent to performing several pilgrimages."<sup>70</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad finally succeeded in the mission of writing and publishing his book in 1877 from London.<sup>71</sup> This book had in principle been written in Urdu but its actual editing comprised of a full English translation of the Urdu text. Sayyid Ahmad's mission for a 'European edition

of the book was that this book would sell good and the English will buy it in large number. Till now there has been no book in English written by a Muslim on the life of Muhammad.<sup>46</sup> Also, Sayyid Ahmad thought that he might not be able to get the services of a competent translator, and that too at an affordable cost in India as was available to him in London.<sup>47</sup> This statement is surprising considering the fact that Sayyid Ahmad had earlier published *Tahqiq-i* both with its original Urdu text and an excellent rendition of it in English. The same could have been done in case of *Life of Muhammad*, especially when Sayyid Ahmad considered it to be a work of great importance and had spent vast amounts of money on it. It may be conjectured that there must have been other considerations in his mind as well due to which he avoided publishing the Urdu version for several years.

Thus this book marked the beginning of a new phase in his religious thought, was not lost upon Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Since his primary purpose for writing this book was to reach out to Western-educated Muslims who may have been under the spell of Muir's claim of writing an 'authentic biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)', he wanted to avoid controversy arising from his book so that he could address this particular class of Muslim readers. Toward Sayyid Ahmad Khan to abstain from propagating more controversial aspects of his thought and focus more on traditionally held doctrines as practised and believed by the Muslims of Malwa is in his letter of 21 January 1890. Sayyid Ahmad expressed the concern that though he has deviated from the opinion of the majority of the Ulama of a new issue only, but even that could lead to a hardship.<sup>48</sup> It was probably this apprehension on the part of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and his desire to keep this important work free from controversy that he decided not to publish the original version of the book till 1887—seventeen years after the publication of its English translation. By that time Sayyid Ahmad himself had progressed so far in his religious views to be mindful of any hardship from the quarters.

In responding to Muir's allegations, Sayyid Ahmad Khan penned twelve extensive lectures dealing with different aspects of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) life.<sup>49</sup> Written primarily with the purpose of countering the allegations made by Muir, Sayyid Ahmad did not restrict to a sentence-by-sentence refutation of Muir. As already noted, Muir had first surmised a lot of *authentic* sources for the study of the Prophet's life and then from these *authentic* sources he had picked up information to narrate the details of his life and his teachings, to discredit Muir by challenging his so-called *approach* to the history of Islam and the life of

in Prophet was, then, Sayyid Ahmad's primary motive. This is why the first essay that he wrote in London was composed of a detailed discussion about the sources of Islamic history in which Sayyid Ahmad had undertaken a *questenarrativit* of his own.<sup>105</sup> In this section of the chapter, Sayyid Ahmad Khan's theme is for scrutinizing the source material regarding the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would be discussed. It would then be followed by an exposition of the ways in which Sayyid Ahmad's findings regarding *sunna*, *ahadith*, *ahad*, and *Sahih* literature were used by him to rebut Muir and later to further his religious ideas in other fields of Muslim scholarly studies.

As already noted, Muir did not go to the pseudo-scholarly basis of Muslim criticism of Hadith literature and proceeded to formulate a criteria of his own without referring to the perceptions of the Muslim Hadith criticism which he summarily dismissed as being inadequate. With no reference to the provisions of Muslim tradition, in sum, it became easier for his Muslim critics to question the validity of his own criteria. This lack of expertise in traditional Muslim sciences on Muir's part is even more highlighted by his preference for *Sahih* over *ahadith* literature and leaves him vulnerable to his Muslim opponents' claims against his proposed critical framework. Sayyid Ahmad was quick to dismiss Muir's declaration of biographers like Ibn Ishaq, Waqidi and Tabari as unreliable and authentic for documenting the life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He pointed out that there were many traditions in these books that were not worthy of reliance for want of chain of honesty on the part of their narrators or because of breaks in the chains of transmission. In Sayyid Ahmad's opinion, the lapse on the part of these authors was obvious; they did not foresee that their written works would later be quoted to justify certain religious practices and would give rise to dogmatism even among the Muslims. This was why they included a variety of traditions in their books without being much concerned about the reliability of the transmitters.<sup>106</sup> But the Orientalists, says Sayyid Ahmad, have committed the mistake of relying on these *Sahih* and his other books without validating the authenticity of their contents. This does so either with a deliberate intent to misguidance,<sup>107</sup> or because of their Christian beliefs whereby several books, in and upon the main body of Biblical text are accorded sacred status. In his commentary of the same, Sayyid Ahmad had dealt with the same issue. He had observed on the Christian doctrine of including in the Gospels, the epistles and extraneous accounts recorded by Christ's apostles.<sup>108</sup>

In case of Hadith scholarship, Sayyid Ahmad had to be careful not to be perceived as being too protective of Hadith literature. That would have made it difficult for him to reject some of the allegations made by Mairi and other Orientalists in the 19th century. But at the same time Sayyid Ahmad could not make so fully Mairi's observations regarding the authenticity of Hadith literature. So Sayyid Ahmad takes a middle course. He agrees with Mairi to the extent of expressing his concern regarding the origin of Hadith literature, but he also does not denying Mairi's criticism by stating that Hadith from false origin is his own work. Sayyid Ahmad Khan objects to the contents of Hadith literature by focusing on its social aspects: (1) The veracity and extent of the authority of Hadith as *muḥaddith* (2) Traditional Hadith sciences.

As a result, noted Mairi's comments have distinguished between Quran and Hadith as being *naḥw muḥaddith* and *ghayr muḥaddith* respectively. In his commentary on the same, Sayyid Ahmad had referred to Hadith as comprising of *naḥw ghayr muḥaddith* i.e. such expositions in which merely the subjects were not mentioned in Quran but they are taken up in a typical manner. In a few years after writing his own views on the history and development of Hadith literature, he realised that that of Mairi is better with which he counts three types of *ṭūp* Hadith: (i) those in accordance with the Quran, (ii) those that emanate from some of the Quran, and (iii) those related to matters that have not been discussed by the Quran. In the first two categories, with this, which is shown to be so, it is said to be the things of the Quran. The third one, however, is supposed to be undesirable. In the third category, *ḥadīth ḥadīth*, Sayyid Ahmad has a few comments. The extent of Prophetic authority, he admits that, he cannot meet necessarily comes with the writings of the Prophet, it can conclusively be proven as being a Hadith. The content and series of outside particulars on some religious facts. The very strong authority of the Prophet is better than now are they as related to all from Hadith in terms of their subject-matter as categorized by Sayyid Ahmad Khan as: (i) those dealing with religious, (ii) dealing in some particular matters, (iii) dealing in the education of all the people, and (iv) about political and administrative aspects.<sup>10</sup> As to the first type of Hadith, it is incumbent upon the Muslims to follow the teachings of the Prophet. For he revealed three matters, says Sayyid Ahmad Khan, it is not religiously binding on the Muslims to follow the practices of the Prophet. The reason that Muslims normally tend to follow the teachings of their Prophet in these fields is their love and respect of the Prophet and a desire to earn reward in these acts of devotion in this life, he called "his be" in the non-binding

lack of the Prophet's authority and his personage being far from ideal make him far more with Muir's hypothesis regarding the origin of the literature Muir had argued that the collections of Hadith were primarily sponsored by successive Muslim rulers to accommodate new and demanding political situations by creating Sunna, and protecting the Prophet as ideal for Sayyid Ahmad means the explanation for his collection of Hadith were not because in a certain Hadith collections had collection of other vested interests to achieve and performed their task out of their devotion for their religion and the Prophet. According to Sayyid Ahmad this is also corroborated by the fact that only a small portion of Hadith collections survive to present. Also, Muslims have never considered matters pertaining to the Prophet to be within the scope of revelation. The Prophet had not even allowed writing down his words or acts dictated by him as the Holy Prophet's words are of divine nature. But the Muslims certainly do accord deep respect to all his acts and sayings.

The concluding fact of the discussion even though painful to us is not as a conditional as may appear from the preceding statement of Sayyid Ahmad Khan. One will have to take into consideration the important moral lesson which the Prophet of Islam has taught. The Prophet's command could be put to further scrutiny on the basis of *da'wat-i-muhammadiyah*. Sayyid Ahmad Khan is warranted, he says Sayyid Ahmad Khan, by the late eighteenth century record of Hadith literature. According to him, Hadith could not be written down and compiled in book form before the lapse of two centuries following the death of the Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa alayhi salam). For his statement compilation of Hadith took place at the companions of the Prophet did not realise the importance of keeping written records. In fact some of them were still busy against the practice of the group, as they were only the oral writing was still in its embryonic stage in Arabia. The Arabs were more inclined to memory for recording various aspects of their history and literature. But oral tradition and its transmission was easy to tamper with and people did not exercise necessary caution from encouraging people to practice good deeds and virtuous acts to attract an audience for their own selfish ends.<sup>14</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad does not state the fact that a few individuals in the Prophet's lifetime carried their collection and made it record. Hadith but most of them had no record. It was because many people, who had seen the Prophet and listened to him, were illiterate and no real urgency was felt about the death of this early generation of Muslims as there was no need to record anything. With time, the necessity of recording the traditions

in writing was zero, and it was less necessary by the scholars of Hadith to devise particular rules whereby true Hadith could be sorted out and sifted from false reports. This brings us to the second aspect of Hadith studies, i.e. canons of classical criticism of Hadith literature, touched upon by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in his writings.

The most important aspect of this Hadith criticism was the *isnad* system whereby every narrator was expected to disclose the names of a continuous chain of narrators going back to the Prophet. The purpose of this system was to enable the Hadith scholars to evaluate the character and prestige of each one of the names provided in the chain of transmission so as to form an opinion on its credibility. For a Hadith to be regarded as one worth reliable *isnad*, Sayyid Ahmad specified some conditions. A pious and virtuous narrator should clearly and unambiguously report the words of the Prophet without there being any gap or errors in *isnad*. All the transmitters should be known for their intellect and knowledge of Fiqh so that it can be assumed that they understood the meaning of the saying correctly and related it to others in a proper way.<sup>10</sup> When these traditional tests of *isnad* criticism are applied to most strict form then only five Hadith emerge reliable as they alone reach the level of *Mutawatir* (cf. Appendix I). Even these Ahadith do not give the money that they have been related to the very words of the Prophet. In the light of these arguments, Sayyid Ahmad concluded that almost every Hadith had to undergo content analysis.

In discussing the concept of *dirayat* or content-analysis,<sup>11</sup> Sayyid Ahmad expounds his dissatisfaction with the work done in this field by Muslim scholars. According to him, the *Muhaddithin* (compilers of Hadith) worked hard and with immense dedication to collect the sayings attributed to the Prophet and set rules for grading the authenticity of each one of them by developing *ilm al-Riyal* (the science of studying the narrators of Hadith). But they left out the more important task of *dirayat*. It was not that they did not realize its importance but rather it was too mammoth a task and they could not possibly do so in their own lifetime. Hence, the responsibility for carrying this tradition forward was left to the succeeding generations. Indeed, nearly the scholars of a succeeding generation revered the works done by earlier *Muhaddithin* to such an extent that they did not dare attempt such a scrutiny of Hadith.<sup>12</sup> Sayyid Ahmad, therefore, strives to draft his own canons of content-analysis by drawing upon the works done by earlier *Muhaddithin*.<sup>13</sup> The criteria he applies – a further for content analysis states – at the words and style used in the *matan* of a Hadith were to be examined and the content of

every Hadith shall be compared with religious doctrines and beliefs as contained in the Quran or reported by authentic Hadith. For those Ahadith which report a historical incident, its details in the content of Hadith should neither run counter to the known details of an historical event nor should it comprise details which reason does not accept.<sup>49</sup>

In a nutshell, it can be said that Sayyid Ahmad Khan's ideas on Hadith did not entail an outright rejection of the entire corpus of Hadith. His approach regarding Hadith was novel insofar as it suggested limiting the authority of the Prophet to religious sphere alone and by opening up Hadith literature for scrutiny on the pretext of its purportedly sceptical historicity. Hence appropriating the right to authenticate the historicity of Hadith in the light of *amaal* criticism and credibility of its contents in accordance with his own set of rational criterion, and the mitigation of the authority of the Prophet himself to whom these Ahadith refer to, define the crux of Sayyid Ahmad's approach toward Hadith. Such an approach distinguishes him from the proponents of Hadith who repose almost unconditional trust in the authenticity of Hadith and authority of the Prophet and give credence to Sayyid Ahmad's importance as one of the earliest and most notable persons voicing critical and revisionist ideas about the whole edifice of Islam paradigm.

### 3.7. APPLICABILITY OF SAYYID AHMAD KHAN'S CRITERION OF HADITH IN THE REBUTTAL OF MU'IZ'S BIOGRAPHY OF THE PROPHET

With these ideas of Sayyid Ahmad on Hadith and criteria specified by him for its critical scrutiny, it became possible for him to demonstrate the *applicability* in the rebuttal of some of the allegations made by Mu'iz. In his narration of the *Satanic Verses*, Mu'iz had depicted the Prophet as an impostor. Sayyid Ahmad has quoted a long excerpt from *Munawwir al-Laduniya* in which this whole event has been narrated along with the opinion of various scholars on it. This event has been reported from different sources but none of the reports have continuous chains of transmission. In the opinion of the author of *Munawwir al-Laduniya*, Al-Qastalani, this deficiency in *isnad* is covered up by the multiplicity of reports and reporters. Sayyid Ahmad refuses to accept this argument because it fails to fulfil the criteria for a reliable *naqd* and is also too explicitly in contradiction to the teachings of the Quran and mission of the Prophet to hold any semblance of reliability.<sup>50</sup> But as some Muslim





Christians toologans and mapaniry of Muslim scholars view them. Sayyid Ahmad explains the meaning of *naskh* in this context as:

There are to be found in the Koran, and in the sayings of the Prophet, many commandments relating to one and the same matter, but under different circumstances, and when one of those circumstances no longer remains, the commandment relating thereto does not remain in force, while the commandment which is intended to meet the altered circumstances then comes into operation, the former commandment being called *Mansukh* and the one subsequent to it, *Nasikh*.<sup>25</sup>

It is replacement takes place not because of any defect in the former commandment but because of a change in circumstances that had made that former commandment applicable in the first place. Those among the Muslim scholars who argue in favour of *naskh* quote sayings of the Prophet to support their argument. But Sayyid Ahmad refers to another Hadith in which the Prophet is reported to have advised his followers not to contradict one part of the Quran by another, but rather to reconcile the import of two passages as much as possible.<sup>26</sup> Sayyid Ahmad concludes his discussion of *naskh* by arguing that this misunderstanding may have arisen because some Muslims must have confused the *matla*, or the Quran with *ghayr matla* or Hadith. This led them to the wrong conclusion that certain portions of Quran have been cancelled due to their excision from the Quranic text.<sup>27</sup>

When it came to Muir's refutation of miracles attributed to Prophet Muhammad, once again Sayyid Ahmad found himself caught in a dilemma. This was due to his Nationalist views, Sayyid Ahmad did not believe in supernatural events. Most, on the other hand, did believe in miracles. Both, however, were agreed on the 'fabled' nature of those sayings which had reported these miracles. But Sayyid Ahmad chooses not to agree with Muir's charge against the Muhaddithun of connecting these tales to ennobel the image of Prophet Muhammad. Instead, instead of getting a direct counter-reply, he goes on to criticize the line of Muir's reasoning which fails to take into account all the miraculous deeds of Moses and Jesus. The notion of the Egyptian pharaohs, including their power with supernatural attributes, due to their superstitious reverence, stated Sayyid Ahmad, were equally applicable to those many amazing and 'improved' tales found in Christian literature.<sup>28</sup> As a result, Sayyid Ahmad to denounce the authenticity of such incidents in Islamic literature without accepting Muir's opinion of disrespect for the character and achievements of Muhaddithun.

In *Khuthbat*, Sayyid Ahmad has discussed only two of several supernatural events reportedly occurring during Muhammad's (ﷺ) life: the "opening" of the chest of Muhammad (*Shuqq-e Sadr*) and his Night Journey (*Mi'raj*). *Shuqq-e Sadr* has been mentioned in Quran only once.<sup>10</sup> While three Quranic verses possibly refer to *Mi'raj*. Much of the details for these two incidents are derived from Ahadith. Sayyid Ahmad believes that traditions reporting these incidents are numerous in number but they are "so much at variance with each other that not to speak of the numerous other rules by which they ought have proved to be false and spurious, the mere fact of their so manifestly contradicting one another nullifies them altogether."<sup>11</sup> He simply quotes the text of these traditions to make his point. In Han's opinion it was with regard to these two incidents that Sayyid Ahmad's view in *Khuthbat* was considerably at variance with the rest of the Muslims.<sup>12</sup> The reason why Han did not cite Sayyid Ahmad's views on *Hauqif* as expressed in *Khuthbat* to be objectionable, was that in the following decades Sayyid Ahmad went even further in his criticism of Hadith literature and laid down even more stringent rules for validating a particular saying as being attributed to the Prophet. Only then did his views on Hadith become explicit enough to prove he a total and causing to a charge of being a Munkar-Hadith denier of Hadith.

### 3.8. SAYYID AHMAD KHAN'S CRITIQUE OF HADITH AFTER 1870

In *Khuthbat*, Sayyid Ahmad expressed his satisfaction with the works done by Muhaddithin in the field of *mustahkam* but at the same time emphasized the need for subjecting Ahadith to the rigours of *dabt*. In articles written shortly after his return from England,<sup>13</sup> Sayyid Ahmad did not debate much on the topic of the Prophet's authority and its imitations. He was more concerned in convincing the Muslims that not every Hadith attributed to the Prophet were *actually* his sayings. For him, there were two reasons to hold such a belief. Firstly, the reports had been narrated orally and could not have been transmitted from one narrator to the other in exactly the same words, secondly the fact that leading Muslim Ulama had found it necessary to set rules for differentiating between different Ahadith was a proof in itself that they had not fully accepted every reported saying of the Prophet as being actually his. In this regard he refers to Shah Wali Ullah's categorization of Hadith books according to the level of authenticity and the criteria set by Shah Abdur Aziz to

was not fit to be a criterion.<sup>54</sup> As Sayyid Ahmad concluded, it was utterly disrespectful and contrary to Islam to accept every Hadith as the Prophet's saying.<sup>55</sup> He found it necessary to lay down rules according to which the status of a particular saying could be ascertained, in doing so, Sayyid Ahmad gave a list of *mutawatir* (seven rules), some of which he had already coined in *Asnadul*. He asserted that he made it his earlier rules contained some additional types of sayings. In the end, he again emphasized the need of compatibility with *tafsir* (exegesis) and *qur'ān* (scripture) as evidence for the acceptance of a Hadith as being authentic.<sup>56</sup>

Sayyid Ahmad listed these rules, inevitably, to ensure that Muslims avoided due respect to only those sayings which could definitely be proved to have been uttered by the Prophet. But his approach toward Hadith was considered, even by his contemporaries, as tantamount to denying the importance or relevance of Hadith by regarding them as an authentic. Ali Bashir Khan's treatise *Taqwīd al-Fiqh* written against Sayyid Ahmad's religious dogmas charged him with denying the authenticity of all the Hadith and by extension, for denying the following *Sunnah*.<sup>57</sup> Ali Bashir's assessment of Sayyid Ahmad's religious views was fairly accurate because he neither took into cognizance Islamic criteria for accepting a Hadith as genuine nor did he refer to Sayyid Ahmad's intention as being religious and temporal to limit the sphere of the Prophet's authority to the latter sphere only. In response, Sayyid Ahmad asserted that he was not denying the *Hadith* as an *isnād* as could or seem to have been deduced where he alluded to dozens of Hadith which he tried to bring in terms of the *mutawatir* and *darar*. Sayyid Ahmad believed that his views on Hadith were different from the rest only to the extent that he regarded *thabit* (fixed) *isnād* to be reputed as *mutawatir* (or *mutawatir* was a *thabit* *isnād*) as *mutawatir* was a *thabit* *isnād*. But the latter was the bulk of the Hadith. He gave examples of such *thabit* *isnād* to leave all the entire corpus of Hadith open to revision and re-orientation.

A more serious criticism of Sayyid Ahmad's method studies was made by Mir Hamid Husayn Bhatnagar, an early Urdu Hadith scholar from Punjab and author of *Asnad al-Sunnat*. Bhatnagar made two arguments were with regard to *mutawatir* *isnād* in the transmission of Hadith from the Prophet's exact words but those of the transmitter and acceptance of weak *Abadith* on the basis of which Sayyid Ahmad made both his arguments against many portions of Hadith to be rejected. According to Sayyid Ahmad, was wrong in saying that al-Litham and Muhammad bin Yunus had accepted *mu'ajjal* *isnād*. At the time they made the provision that *Fiqh* was derived in Hadith studies and *fiqh* was with its various aspects

use the Companions. Followers of the Companions or the next among the Muhaddithun were allowed to simply narrate the gist of the meaning of a tradition rather than communicate (in exact words) even though the rule was relaxed if it was only rarely reported to. This is the reason why numerous traditions to be found in dozens of Hadith books or the authority of hundreds of different transmitters all have the same words.<sup>16</sup> The Muhaddithun had categorized Hadith on the basis of relative strength or weakness in the tradition, more types of which had been referred by Sayyid Ahmad in his studies, but it did not mean that even the authentic Hadith collections were filled with such traditions as Sayyid Ahmad had been trying to show.<sup>17</sup> Due to the presence of such unauthentic Arabic, Sayyid Ahmad had proceeded to formulate his *usul al-hadith* in which *isnad* and *matn* were not variable or *darfur* in the first place and at best could be regarded as rules for *isnad* and *matn*. In case these rules were applied to *darfur*, it would result in accepting all traditions whose *isnad* practice was a rational and objective action in conformity with Quranic teachings, even if they were not sayings of the Prophet.<sup>18</sup> Batatawi is less convincing on the question of possible incongruities between the Quran and Hadith. In Batatawi's opinion such a situation arises due to misunderstanding of the meaning of a Hadith. His "real" meanings are always exactly in accordance with the Quran.<sup>19</sup> Mubarrad Qasim Nanawati thus expressed his reservations on the value of comparison of Hadith contents with Quranic teachings and rational wasayhi. In any case he was clearly of the view that preference was to be given to Hadith and not to reason. At best one could make arguments confirming the meanings of Hadith to rational reasons, though at that time such arguments would not be needed for its acceptance. It is to make the account question possible. In case of the Quran the very existence of incongruity between the Quran and *shari'ah* implied the *shari'ah* to be a later fabrication. But the question of such a contradiction was to be settled in those well-versed in the Quran, Hadith, and with true knowledge of the nature of difference between the two.<sup>20</sup> It was not appropriate, he noted, for him or for Sayyid Ahmad Khan to attempt such a demanding undertaking. He left it to the *ulamah* and *shaykh mujaqqid*, represented by Nanawati and Batatawi respectively, dismissed Sayyid Ahmad's rationale for making adjustments in the *usul* canon of Hadith criticism based on his reservations about the contradictions to be found between the Quran and Hadith and modernity.

Sayyid Ahmad also opposed other his views on Hadith not just from Ulama but also from his close associates. Mubarrad Qasim Mubarrad Ali Khan

asked Sayyid Ahmad in a letter to advertise clearly that no Hadith is worthy of a sequence.<sup>12</sup> Mushtaq Husayn, popularly known by his title name *Wazir-ul-Mulk*, advised Sayyid Ahmad to stop publishing controversial articles as it could affect the campaign to collect donations for the proposed madrasa in Aligarh.<sup>13</sup> Even after the persuasions of Mehdi Ali Khan and Mushtaq Husayn, Sayyid Ahmad wrote an article in which he declared false all those traditions which prophesied the advent of Mehdi—an eschatological figure who appeared towards the end of time. In this article he did not set new criteria and just summarily dismissed all the traditions relating to it. But in denying this tradition he seems to have retained his previous stance and conceded to that of Muslims that all such traditions were concocted with the political aim of securing power for the Abbasids or Fatimids.<sup>14</sup>

In his essay on Hadith—and which was also his last statement on Hadith—Sayyid Ahmad stated his chief reason for rejecting more and more of the *hadith*. He referred to the collection of Hadiths opposed by the Muslims accepted traditions which they found suitable for bolstering their faith and set aside those which were contrary to Qur'anic teachings, a proper historical account and depicted the great Muslim tradition in a negative manner whatsoever. Sayyid Ahmad, too, had identified such an attitude on the part of Muslims. Yet he just left the Muslims. Further, accepting or rejecting traditions from the same source or source(s) had to be as long as it was carried out on the basis of some set of criteria. For this purpose Sayyid Ahmad presented another set of rules for evaluation of *hadith* to arrive at what he included as certain of the factors that Muslims had used. He agreed with Muslim that a few of the narrators could be trustworthy *hadith* narrators who recorded the glory of Prophet Muhammad (*ﷺ*) as a Prophet who "some nations simply become narrators so as to gain prestige and respect for themselves." The other rules presented by Sayyid Ahmad had already been used by Muslim *Akbar* with a liberal hand made to them when he had used *muft* *muft* in many of his essays. The new principles introduced by Sayyid Ahmad rejected any tradition that praised the virtues of Prophet Muhammad (*ﷺ*). This disapproval by him can be as the former might be a reflection of his companions' inner feelings for the Prophet, and the latter an invention of the reporters by Sayyid Ahmad. It was common to reject such a tradition if one were a *muft* *muft*. Let that Prophet Muhammad (*ﷺ*) was the most virtuous and noble of all human beings.

Sayyid Ahmad's *rules of *darayyat** (or the basis of which a Hadith is to be scrutinized) are open-ended statements with wide-ranging interpretations. They can be best understood when applied in a given context. And much of it is derived from the works of classical scholars. The originality of Sayyid Ahmad's contribution (hence lies in his bold insistence on overcoming the inhibition to place on questioning the established authority and precedents accepted as valid) and the ingenuity with which he put these principles of Hadith criticism to use. This application of the rules is best seen in Sayyid Ahmad's *Tafsir*. For an exegesis of the Quran, Sayyid Ahmad did not have to coin new rules for Hadith criticism though he did formulate his *usul-i tafsir* (principles of exegesis) and emphasized the need for giving up adherence to the works of early commentators and to devise instead new principles in order to meet the requirements of the modern age.<sup>12</sup> The criteria for Hadith already laid down by him enabled Sayyid Ahmad to discard any Hadith cited by the commentators of some of the earlier but inconsistent with internal evidence from the Quran, rational thought and verified historical events. And in his exegetical essays he did not accept any Hadith that went against reason by reporting supernatural events, especially when it came to dealing with *qisas*. It was because one of the major themes of Sayyid Ahmad's *Tafsir* was the interpreting of Quranic stories in terms of natural causation to prove that none of these stories narrated any supernatural phenomena.

As for the two of his later *rules of *darayyat** Sayyid Ahmad, in his last writings on Islam dealing with the controversies surrounding Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) wives, demonstrated the application as he rejected all the narratives regarding the Prophet's marriage to Zaynab described by Muir in a titillating manner.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.9. HADITH CRITICISM AFTER SAYYID AHMAD KHAN

Sayyid Ahmad Khan's critical approach towards the works of those Muhadithun and commentators, which had long been considered worthy of respect and *sajid* by Muslim scholars, laid down a foundation for further scrutiny of various aspects of the broad paradigm not just by Sayyid Ahmad himself but other Muslim scholars as well. At the time Sayyid Ahmad began to contribute towards this topic there was no literature available in Urdu on the subject of critical re-evaluation of Hadith. Later during his career, however, some other scholars too started raising and publishing similar concerns. Awad Husayn Ha. (1834-

1843), a noted poet and critic and one of the most important associates of Sayyid Ahmad's. Algar Mahomed was infatuated with some of these ideas on Hadith. He too believed in the line along between the Prophet's saying and his dealing, with his role as a Prophet, and often relating to his persona – his said and doings. Like Sayyid Ahmad, he referred to Shah Waliullah's views in this regard to support his argument:

Has avoided taking up serious analysis of traditions or setting them for any purpose, but he induces a general belief in the utility of such a course by citing evidence from the works – classical Muslim – that in the past that a number of weak and fabricated traditions did become part of the general body of Ahadith, and those dealing specifically with Ishaq. According to him, interpreters add weak traditions to their works to counter the arguments of his rival sects or to explain Quranic verses in accordance with the dictates of Greek philosophy. For the utility of some – the so-called Ahl-i Sunn-i Ahl-i Bid'ah – Sayyid and Ibrahim. Has reached the conclusion that a number of his authorities quote his commentators about Quranic *qur'ān* had been removed from Al-Jahilī. I frequently find the Book of Quran as well as his own writings worthy of change. In saying so, Ha was clearly following the lead floated by Sayyid Ahmad regarding Quran stories. I do not see the Ha's were. However, to support Sayyid Ahmad's views even at the time of its publication (i.e. in 1879) Sayyid Ahmad had started publishing his essays on Quranic *qur'ān* and had encountered a lot of opposition because of his 'naturalist' approach in interpreting these events.

After Sayyid Ahmad's death, Ha wrote another essay titled 'Is there a room for another interpretation of Quran?' where he favoured Sayyid Ahmad's view that there was a need for a new *fiqh al-Qur'an* (science of Quranic exegesis) in the face of developments in the field of Science and Philosophy though he did not explicitly send his support to that of Sayyid Ahmad's religious ideas and understanding of Quran as expressed by *Jabar*. His main aim was to support Sayyid Ahmad's vision of writing a *fiqh* with a new approach, but not to assess his findings in this regard. In *fiqh al-Qur'an* Ha took up the issue of much detail. There could be no doubt Sayyid Ahmad's efforts in covering a new *fiqh al-Qur'an*. After Sayyid Ahmad's interpretation of the *fiqh al-Qur'an*, Ha compared in detail the similarities and differences between his religious ideas and other Muslim scholars and Sayyid Ahmad. In his assessment, Ha did not seem to have turned away from Sayyid Ahmad's religious views though he appeared to be inclined in its favour.

A more scholarly study of Hanafi law was carried out by another of Sayyid Ahmad's associates, Shihab al-Nu'mani (1757–1844) who was more of a traditionalist marginal to affected by modernity.<sup>14</sup> He was a strict Hanafi and his reverence for the learned tradition of Hanafi fiqh – Abu Hanifa – was judged from the fact that Shihab's pen name, al-Nu'mani, comes from Abu Hanifa's real name, Nu'man. In Shihab's opinion a man could be a Christian but not a *ghayr muqallid* – free with such views, *shaf'i* was considerably more lax in his views on *hadith* than the rest of the Hanafis, especially *dehqans*. His ideas on *hadith* are more or less found in his biography of Abu Hanifa, called *maṭlaʿ al-Nu'man* – published shortly before Sayyid Ahmad's last statement on *hadith* – where he enumerates and defends Abu Hanifa's contributions to *hadith*. Nu'mani argued that the reason *al-ḥadith* had been rejected in the *shahīh* was on the authority of Abū Hanīfa was not because of any doubts as to his credentials as a *Muhaddith* but because his specialized field was that of *fiqh*. As a *fiqh* man, Abu Hanifa was concerned more with those traditions were that could have a bearing on legal rulings. As for *al-ḥadith*, it is strict to be accepting that some *ḥadith* are not the most number of *ahādīth* being reported on his authority. This is a criticism in our view of *Abū Hanīfa's* main contribution to *hadith* studies.

Shihab agreed with Sayyid Ahmad in lauding the efforts of the *Muhaddith* in collecting *ḥadīth* and in pointing out the lack of uniform analysis of the tradition that they have collected. According to Shihab, *Abū Hanīfa's* solution to his problem in a major way is to be found in establishing the principles of *muṣṭaḥṣan*. His principles of giving precedence to *al-ḥaṣṭa* over *al-mutāḥṣan* and accepting *shahīh ḥadīth* as conjectural only, were part of Sayyid Ahmad's doctrine as well. His third principle, *al-ḥadīth al-khawṣ*, hidden reason, states that a *ḥadīth* with many of repetitions – and containing a lot of related studies is capable of achieving a certain ability whereby he can doubt the veracity of *ḥadīth*.<sup>15</sup> The other two aspects of *Abū Hanīfa's* *ḥadīth* analysis was to set up a hierarchy order to be more hierarchical in its additions – the corresponding level of their legal effectiveness at the three levels of *ḥadīth* – namely thus established: *Abū Hanīfa* gave preference

*muṣṭaḥṣan* and *muṣṭaḥṣan*. In use of *shahīh ḥadīth*, note leverage to the *ḥadīth* for arriving at a legal edictment or ruling. Since the bulk of the *ḥadīth* material is based on reports by a single narrator, the number of corroborating traditions is greatly lessened. In this already reduced and graded *ḥadīth* material, Shihab called *Abū Hanīfa's* distinction between *ḥadīth* – legal and *ghayr ḥadīth* (non legal) (conclusion of the



Prophet in doing so. Shibli at times gave wide room for fresh legislation in Islam.<sup>40</sup>

Shibli's religious thought process evolved further and the orthodox Hanafi ideas that he held on he were toned down. This is seen in his magnum opus *Naṭṭ-i-Nabī* as he evaluates in relative terms of historical evidence available for writing Prophet Muhammad's portrait. Shibli, like Mulla and Sayyid Ahmad, Shibli gave foremost preference to the Quran which was followed by Hadith instead of Sunna or Maphuz as was a primary expectation of the Hanafi literature. But he did not acquiesce to the authority and authenticity of Hadith literature unreservedly. Shibli found fault with a number of traditions in *Bukhari* and *Muslim* which clearly required a change in his initial view of them.<sup>41</sup>

Both Shibli and Sayyid did not go to the extent of agreeing with the details of Sayyid Ahmad's Hadith criticism but they retained the importance of his work in defending the character of the Prophet and teaching of Islam from the standards of missionaries, Orientalists and their critics with similar ideas. They responded to criticism of Islam and its Prophet in a similar manner not only in Sayyid Ahmad, there did not attempt to undertake a detailed and systematic critique of Hadith to use between critics for the authentication of Hadith through which he could counter the arguments of their opponents.<sup>42</sup> The same holds true for Muslim modernists like Sayyid Amir Ali (1849–1928)<sup>43</sup> who during his modern years in England wrote *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Muhammad* in English which was published from London in 1873. Amir was critical of the book with some reservations and called *The Spirit of Islam* was published in 1890. Amir Ali's book is a scholarly work which surpasses Sayyid Ahmad's *Chahar Maqala* as it contains comparative critical, social and religious studies and arguments in which he is critical on the a number of Islamic works or philosophy, ethics and history. But when it came to a critical analysis of some sayings of Prophet Ali did not resort to drafting rules for accepting sayings of the Prophet as a basis of rational-critical analysis. He applied more or less the same standards provided by Sayyid Ahmad which he adopted a similar methodological approach and quoted fragments from Sayyid Ahmad's work.<sup>44</sup> An indication that Amir Ali made in narrating the origin of Hadith literature and Islamic traditions made to it was to emphasise in a more detailed manner the role of political interests. These interesting studies in accordance with a similar tendency he remarked that all traditions regarding Ali's claim to the caliphate were suppressed.<sup>45</sup> On the basis of this he said

not rule out the role of other traditions in explaining the many differences between the Muslims.

Being a lawyer, Asaf Ali was more concerned with the question of Hanafi status as a primary source to that of the Quran. In this respect he gave primacy to the Quran as the 'extensive and source of Muslim law and applied agencies' in ruling, but to only the 'out few centres of Islam'. But he did accord respect to Hanafi and its related branches of *adab* developed by Muslim scholars over centuries as valuable contributions to 'historiography'.<sup>57</sup> was because he claimed himself to be a Shari'atist who had a genuine faith in alleged sayings of the Prophet as appearing in *ahadith* and in accordance with his *fiqh*. For Muhammad made the 'developed teachings as explained and illustrated by the philosophers and jurists of his race'.<sup>58</sup>

The most important person other than Sayyid Ahmad to radically revise traditionally held Muslim views regarding *islah*, Paradise, and even Quran was Maqbul Qasbi Asaf Ali Shah.<sup>59</sup> His views were so different from that of Sayyid Ahmad, he was concerned with replies to the Christian polemical literature as a religious and religious scholar and to challenge the missionary activities of Christians and missionaries and the quality of its provisions to keep in with the changing time. In his earlier work *Umdat al-Usul* in response to the *Imam al-Din Farabi's Muqaddimah* Shah charged Asaf Ali had further developed his radical ideas regarding Hadith. He accepted Hadith as a valuable mean for remembering what the prophets said at the source of Hadith, but he questioned the after Prophets migration to Medina and reached it as a prophet, not as a prophet.

Asaf Ali, in his later works, however, he went to the extent of upturning the role of Islamic sources in formulating civil laws and their relevance to the functioning of the state and the management of its political affairs. He expressed these views in *The Improved Principles of Constitutional and Legal Reform in the Ottoman Empire and Other Authentic Sources* published in 1883. In this book he argued that making Muslim political and civil law amendable to change may be accomplished by presenting the Quran as more than a book of moral exhortations meant for the spiritual purification of the Arabs. According to Asaf Ali the Quran was not meant to give definitive guidance about civil law or law-governed principles of jurisprudence. It is only verses relating to most issues number only 200 out of 6,000 total verses of the Quran. Even these verses are composed of a single word or an isolated sentence and hence do not allow much leverage for deducing rules or laws for civil and political institutions. What had been regarded by the

Muslim jurists as verses dealing with civil law were actually the Quran's odious and harmful accommodations with some of the tribal and pre-Islamic customs of Arabs due to their state of decadence. This was to be considered as a valid explanation for Qasbi's dealings with matters pertaining to polygamy, divorce, consanguinity and slavery. According to him, these accommodations were set aside in the past, strength, or rather when a when they had begun to emerge under its influence from their barbarism into a higher condition of amelioration.

He elaborated his case further in *Practical Exposition of the Popular Journal*, published in 1885, adding that these laws had been introduced to allow the transformation of a barbaric community into a higher state of civilization and to set a general rule for all the communities of the world which already had the desired level of civilization. Not only did Chiragh Ali introduce the rule of distinction between the religious and the secular in Qasbi's comments, which have not been done by any other historian, in case of Haithi, he questioned the very existence of its contents dealing with religious rituals and injunction. His claim that the Quran did not prescribe a just way of performing Namaz and simply summarized the believers to remain at Qasbi anywhere and at any time without determining its details as a guide for offering the prayers, was later used by an American-based Ahl-i-Quran group by the name of Ummat-i-Muslmana.

Chiragh Ali, treating Hadith as the second source of Muslim Law (Shari'ah), has traced the history of Hadith in which he agrees with Muir that on some matters of detail, the opinion Muir's view, believed that the conversation of the companions of the prophet were mostly about him and that they made an effort to follow his sayings especially when later generations began to regard his spiritual powers in the vernacular as the Prophet. As the accumulation of Hadith material began, it soon gave rise to a mixed bag of true as well as fabricated traditions. The efforts made by later scholars to sift genuine traditions from the ones came too late and were too inadequate. Chiragh Ali made use of Muir's terminology to describe the Hadith system as a pseudo-critical process. In Chiragh Ali's history of Hadith, the focus is more on why no written record of Hadith literature was available for a long period of time. For example, he stated that the purpose of the Hadith was meant to be such a temporary source, then why did the Prophet omit the important task of compiling a book of his own sayings? He put the same question to the Hanafis who held the view that Abu Hanifa could not make use of many Ahadith as most Hadith compendiums had not been compiled at that time.

this case, then Chiragh Ali posed the question to the Hanafis as to why Abu Hanifa is referred to his work of *fiqh* — his first place was — having access to the all-important source of Hadith at his disposal? This led Chiragh Ali to conclude that the Prophet's sayings and commands outside the *Qur'an* are based on his opinion (not on *fiqh* and *fiqh* had and have not been made into a law for the general believers. On the basis of this reasoning, Chiragh Ali disapproved the reliance of both the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith* as sources for the formation of any fixed or defined set of laws or political or civil purposes.

In his own religious views Sayyid Ahmad has never questioned the binding authority of the *Qur'an* and limited his objections on *Hadith* to insisting that it be written down on a material basis to make it accessible. It was only with regard to *fiqh* — *conclusions* — that he expressed an explicit refusal to adhere to it. In comparison Chiragh Ali's statements and views on the *Qur'an* and *Hadith* were evidently so general that even Sayyid Ahmad Khan found the contents of his book offensive and provoking. This was the reason of his postponing the publication of the Urdu translation of the book which he thought would cause a storm of criticism and ill-feeling against Chiragh Ali.<sup>2</sup>

Maximizing the flexibility of Islamic law was only one part of Chiragh Ali's radical interpretation for the *Qur'an* and *Hadith*. His other important work was with the issue of *Jihad* — a theme that was being taken up by other Muslims apostles as well. He followed other apostles in denying it. He was against the Prophet's exhortations. His own legal theory came into play when he came up with more controversial ideas about reversing the verses in the *Qur'an* on *Jihad*. It benefited from Sayyid Ahmad's later — giving completely new meanings to some of the verses in utter disregard for what the earlier scholars and commentators had written. For instance with regard to a particular *Qur'anic* verse on *Jihad*, Chiragh Ali held a copy of the *Qur'an* did not exist for Muslims to fight with *infidels* till they accept Islam but only up to the point where the Muslims were enabled to acquire religious freedom.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, he argued that the opinion that *Allah* had made provision for the Muslims to take action against the *Mecans* for not implementing the terms of the agreement by which the Muslims acceded to the Muslims' demands then was never any need to implement the commands this year. That particular *agreement* remained and still remain, as 'an unimplemented order'.<sup>4</sup>

According to Chiragh Ali there were only some verses in the *Qur'an* which conditionally called for the Muslims to fight against the *kafirs*

(infidels). In case of these verses (Qurān) Al. referred to having two explanatory principles that the general or unconditional *amr* verses were to be interpreted in conformity with the specific or conditional *dharr* verses. It was because the 'general ruling is compendious (*muḥṣaṣ*) while the specific ruling is prescriptive (*muḥṣaṣ*) and clearly states the intention of the author.'<sup>164</sup> Once he had proved that the Quran only allowed deicide wars he found it hard to reach his convenient point of uncertainty. Adh. had went again to this clear injunction of the Quran on the basis of 'being fabricated or wrongly transmitted by the narrators'.<sup>165</sup>

Related to this discussion on *dharr* and *amr* is his discussion about the verses of surah. His discussion of these issues gives an excellent example of the Muslim intellectual's attempts to dissociate themselves from the embarrassing details of the past by suggesting alternative versions that fit well with their own minds. As Western educated Muslims influenced by European concepts of enlightenment. This is clearly seen in his comments on the incident of punishment for the Jews of Banu Qaynaq and the Prophet's relation with a concubine turned wife Maria. In case of Banu Qaynaq it has generally been reported that they were punished for their dubious role in the Battle of Trench. As a punishment for their wrong arrangement as a judge, the Jews themselves agreed to give the verdict that all able-bodied men should be put to sword, women and children taken prisoners and their property distributed among Muslims. Some reports quote the Prophet praising Muadh for judging like an Angel. Al. refused to accept all these details. He felt he knew that the Prophet did not do it. Muadh was a *muḥṣaṣ* (free but *muḥṣaṣ* King). He blamed the later transmission to have perverted upon his words difference to extract the maximum use of Muadh. No evidence was cited by Al. to prove his point.<sup>166</sup> In *al-Furqan* he stated that the actual number of men killed was very few. Secondly he disagreed with Muadh's charge that the women and children were sold as slaves. But he did not have any historical reference to this aim other than the presumption that the Quran did not allow slave trade and aspired to bring an end to the encouraging Muslims to free slaves as a means to secure the future presence of war by capturing a war ransom from them. He concluded on this basis that the women and the children must have all been released.<sup>167</sup> Al. had a strong feeling that Prophet Muhammad's personal relations with Maria (Qurān) required a number of objections. He did not find any conclusive evidence suggesting that the ruler of Egypt sent any girls as presents. In case he was interested, he checked to see if he was aware of Maria and whether or not she was a slave girl or a free woman. *Al-Furqan* and *Muḥṣaṣ* are meant to be precise

sending a slave girl as a present in response to the Prophet's letter to him." Similarly, these two authorities do not report Maryam's birth to the Prophet's son Ibrahim. With little credible information available about Maria, Chiragh Ali questioned Muir's interpretation of the events described in *Surah Tahrim* of the Quran as relating to domestic troubles brewing in the Prophet's household because of Maria's addition to his harem giving rise to mutual jealousies among the rest of his wives. Chiragh Ali did not offer an alternative explanation for this event mentioned in the Quran and limited himself to raising doubts about the existence of Maria and the issue of the Prophet having relations with a slave girl. It is possible that Chiragh Ali took up this issue deliberately in response to what Sprenger had written about it in his letter that Quranic verses dealing with the Prophet's family matters shook the religious sentiments of the believers and make it difficult for the devotees to furnish an explanation for it.<sup>10</sup> Sayyid Ahmad too wanted to address this issue but he died before he could finish his essay on the wives of the Prophet and resolve the issues of the Prophet's relations with Maria and the events giving rise to the verses in *Surah Tahrim*.

### 3.10. CONCLUSION

While enumerating the services of Sayyid Ahmad Khan for the Muslims of South Asia, I have cited some of the challenges which the Muslims had to cope with. Missionaries were propagating against Islam its Prophet and teachings while the spread of Western education was making an impact on the impressionable Muslim young Muslims.<sup>11</sup> Sayyid Ahmad Khan's panacea for facing these challenges to the Muslim faith was tied up with renouncing *taqlid* and making way for fresh thinking in religious, social and political aspects of Islam. It was because the prevalent circumstances had brought about a change in Sayyid Ahmad's *neotraditionalism* and forced him to reconsider his views on Muslim sources relating to religion and history of Islam, especially Hadith literature. Accordingly he pioneered to set a precedent for a modernist approach towards different aspects of Islam by re-interpreting Muslim history and dichotomy of the exclusion of any such blemish that might not conform with the dictates of a modern world cast in the mould of predominantly European ideals. This could only be achieved by re-interpreting sacred texts dissociating Islam from some and ascribing new meanings to the rest. It also required, at the same time, setting up of his own standards of *quellentkritisch* so as to disallow similar habits from arguing the cases from

historical texts that were, and normally have been, held in high esteem by Muslim scholars. The end result of Sayyid Ahmad's efforts was the emergence of a neo-Islam<sup>3</sup> the spring and early among Western educated Muslims, whereby they retained the respect and admiration for their religion and their Prophet while at the same time challenging & revising those aspects of traditionally held views which conflicted with the modern scientific ideas inspired largely by Western thought. The emergence of this new religious *corps de elite*—a seceder in the Western tradition of rationality and enlightenment yet cognizant of its identity as a Muslim and adherent of God's best and last religion—led to prevent Sayyid Ahmad's concerns about Western education giving way to a widespread state of apostasy from being actualised. Quite contrary to what Sprenger had prophesied about Western educated Muslims renouncing Islam, these Muslims became the real impetus for a revisionist critique of Islamic South Asia, and doing so a whole new version of Islam gradually emerged, different in many aspects from the traditionally held views of the majority of Muslims. But, Sayyid Ahmad did not start a new re-perpetuating cycle, rise to a new line of thought within Islam; it was far better than having sceptical Muslims renouncing their faith altogether.<sup>4</sup> This is precisely what has happened. As he wrote gaily about the Ulema of the time who had been imparted education in a more traditional way, a new creed of Muslim scholars—subsumable under the appellation of Ahl al-Qur'an—eventually emerged bearing the distinctive intellectual imprint of the writings of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Maulwi Chiragh 'Ali.

## Notes

Sayyid Ahmad Khan was an outstanding scholar of Islamic history. The *As-Samir Hanayya Islam* (c. 2 February 1884). Cited with translation in Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Modern Muslim Scholar and His Critics* (New York: 1978), p. 4. Also Sprenger's letter to Maulwi Chiragh 'Ali (8 May 1891) in Maulwi Chiragh 'Ali, *Letter to Ahmad Khan* (reprinted in *Mustafa Abdul Haq Hyderabad, Decem. 1910*) (p. 11), 75.

1. El-Lama opposed to Sayyid Ahmad, and especially Ahl al-Qur'an, are numerous, including Sayyid Yunus Khan as the pre-eminent Muslim scholar in the sphere of modern Islamic history. *Mawana* (in Ahl al-Hadith's great journal) the opinion of Samiullah Amirani, Taqi Usmani and Abul Ala Maududi on the effect that Sayyid Ahmad Khan was the first person in India to set the precedent for Ahl al-Qur'an to follow (c. 14 Muhammad Abul al-Khalaf, *So-Naqsh-e-Mawana* (Lahore: Mawana Tashreeh aur Asbab, *Mishadish* 34, 8-9, 2002): 120-21).
2. For a biography of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, cf. Ahsan Husayn Hashi, *Hajrat-i-Jamal* (Lahore: repr. 1966). Sayyid Ahmad's religious ideas have been extensively researched in different studies (cf. Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: Beliefs, Opinions and*





- [illegible]



- 64 Muir calls it as a rule of 'respectable nations' Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, lxv.
- 65 Ibid., xliii.
- 66 Ibid., xlvi.
- 67 Ibid., xlii.
- 68 Ibid., lvi.
- 69 Ibid., i.
- 70 Ibid., lvi.
- 71 Ibid., lvi.
- 72 Ibid., lviii.
- 73 Powell, 'Religious Traditions in Two Families of Scholars', 207. Muir had written a lengthy article on *Muhammedan Controversy* in a number of the same made in such Muslim literatures. Cf. Muir, *Muhammedan Controversy*, 76-88.
- 74 Muir's elder brother John Muir (1800-62) had a similar belief regarding the historicity of miraculous stories in ancient Hindu texts. The Muir brothers reflect the influence of Evidential Theology of William Paley (1743-1805) who is stated that God affirmed true religions by verifiable miracles. Cf. Guenther, *Hadith as Christian-Muslim Discourse*, 73.
- 75 Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, lviii.
- 76 Ibid., lxx.
- 77 Ibid., lxx.
- 78 Ibid., lxxviii.
- 79 Ibid., lxii. studies by Muir.
- 80 On this point he had clear disagreements with Sprenger who seemed to have a more favourable opinion about Hadithians.
- 81 See the following pages for the detailed narration of this event.
- 82 Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, xlvi.
- 83 Ibid., lxxviii.
- 84 Ibid., lxxv.
- 85 The details of this incident, as reported in some Hadith collections and historical texts, are that the Prophet was recited verses from Surah *Al-Ahqaf*. The Start of Quran is from a selective audience of infidel Meccan chiefs as The nineteenth verse of this chapter talks of the pagan goddesses of the Meccans. It says: 'Have you thought upon Al-Lat, Al-Uzza and Manat, the third, the other?' When the Prophet reached the end of this verse, some controversial Ahadith allege that the Satan cast into his mind praise for these deities and made him utter that indeed, they are as high flying cranes. And, indeed when in procession with God is hoped for. After Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w) had finished reciting the verses he prostrated and so did the Meccans present as they felt that the status of their deities has been duly acknowledged. This brought a temporary halt to persecutions inflicted upon the Muslims by the Meccans, and some of the migrants to Abyssinia, after coming to know about the truce between the Muslims and the Meccans, decided to return to Mecca. Later, Gabriel visited the Prophet to inform him about the revocation of the Quranic stipulation to the Jews and the aforementioned verses regarding the deities were replaced with another verse and the rationale for what had taken place was revealed in Surah *Al-Hajj* The Pilgrimage. It said: 'We sent We a messenger or a prophet before thee but when he received the message Satan proposed opposition. In respect of that which he testified thereof. But Allah abolisheth that which Satan proposeth. Then Allah establisheth His revelations. Allah is Knower, Wise. This incident of Satan's verses has been reported by such important authorities as Abdullah Masud, accepted it as true. This incident, in pose doubts about

the ability of the Prophet to serve as an exemplar—those words of wisdom and contradictions—the theoretical principle of Prophetic infallibility (or *isma*) in the transmission of Divine revelation—here, etc.—from the perspective of some Sunni scholars—such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan is shown later in this chapter—the incident should either be categorically denied on the basis of its weak (and/or the narrative refigured as such a way that the Prophet is absolved of the charge of his culpability in the temptations of Satan to indulge in the adulteration of the Qurānic text.

86 Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, II, 159.

87 *Ibid.* IV, 60.

88 *Ibid.* III, 228.

89 *Ibid.* III, 229.

90 *Ibid.* IV, 6.

91 *Ibid.* IV, 62.

92 However, this explanation is not adequate in the face of Muir's prompt rejection of the admission, recognition of the problem and some degree of concern with leading a life of piety and amoral behaviour among Sunnis. Ahmad Khan, Sunnis and Orientalist scholars and historians like Muir and Sprenger have looked into this matter seriously.

93 It is not an arabic version of Ahmad Khan's work towards Al-Husayn Ali Khan. The latter had said Ahmad was proceeding to write a refutation of Muir's replying to Muir's provocative work and yet before his departure he was eager to still upon Muir's sayings adhering to him. After Muir's death, Muir's official notice and as the Lieutenant Governor of United Provinces, Sayyid Ahmad headed a 'Muir Memorial Committee' founded in 1876 which proposed to set up a memorial status for Muir at Allahabad. The committee requested donations from the wealthy and influential of the province. See, *Excerpt of Books*, 49.

94 Hall, *Hajrat-i-Said*, 427.

95 See, Muhammad Tahir, *Parasat-e-Muhammad*, under, Chapter I, 8-1, 48-49.

96 Hall, *Hajrat-i-Said*, 429.

97 The complete title of the book, as published in 1870, is 'A Series of Essays on the Life of Muhammad and Subjects Subsidiary Thereto'. A further subtitle states that the English Edition of the essays has been revised and corrected by a second edition. The title of the book is *A Series of Essays on the Life of Muhammad and Subjects Subsidiary Thereto*. The book has been published in English in the Urdu version. The publisher is as part of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's collected works.

98 Paripari, ed. *Musafir-e-Lahore*, 244. Unfortunately the book could not sell very well. Sayyid Ahmad had expected to make a decent profit as it had been in demand and France but a war broke out between these two countries in 1870-1 which affected the sales. *Ibid.*, 265.

99 *Ibid.*, 242-43.

100 *Ibid.*, 254-55.

101 In all his works Sayyid Ahmad Khan *Essays on the Life of Muhammad* written as a response to William Muir's biography of Prophet Muhammad, is the most popular for both its advantages and detractions. His admirers cite this book to argue for several similarities with the prophet's life and devotion to the Islamic faith. If the Prophet's life comes too hard to digest to be a part of his work done in the pen by Sayyid Ahmad to counter Orientalist polemics to malign the character of the Prophet. For an assessment of Sayyid Ahmad's work see different scholars of Islamic *Ulema*, 425-33.

10. *Paraphrase of Majma' al-Bihar*, vol. 45, 46, in the published version, however, his essay was placed as 6th chapter of the book.
103. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maraqat*, X: 769
104. *Ibid.*, 370
105. *Ibid.*, 715
106. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Tibqayyit-ul-kalām*, i: 39
107. *Ibid.*, 14
108. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maraqat*, X: 383
109. *Ibid.*, 185
11. *Ibid.*, 385. For Sayyid Ahmad's balanced opinion on the issue of the Prophet's infallibility, he reports in a chapter on these affairs that despite of popular beliefs, he is a mortal human being like others. He also refers to Shah Wali Ullah's concept of Prophethood to give evidence to his own statement, *Ibid.*, 185.
12. In *Tibqayyit*, however, Sayyid Ahmad had emphatically emphasized the infallibility of all the Prophets. This theme he had taken up while discussing the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. His interpretation of the events argues that Adam the Prophet was inferior to Allah, the Creator, but he possessed his own authority preceding him. It is because, in his opinion, Adam—being a Prophet and hence not liable to err—could not have disobeyed God by eating fruit from the forbidden tree. See Sayyid Ahmad, *Tibqayyit*, I: 88, 16.
13. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maraqat*, XI: 479–1
14. *Ibid.*, 363–64.
15. *Ibid.*, 399–401.
16. *Ibid.*, 401–02
17. In a formal manner he was not a representative for the cause of knowledge against dogmatic Higher religious authority. On the contrary, *Adab* took notes about the criteria for acceptance and rejection of Traditions, directly from Sayyid Ahmad Khan's *Khatib* and then went ahead to broaden his knowledge on 'Ullāh al-Hadith further. Cf. Alian M. Ghammar, 'The Hadith in Christian-Muslim Dialogue', in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1999, pp. 107–12. In his work, *Ullāh al-Hadith* but then his example was more like of a man lying in the desert and repeating the words of the Prophet as he was not qualified to do so because of his bias and lack of knowledge and thus his way. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maraqat*, X: 405
18. *Ibid.*, 40–04
19. He was to do the same for writing an exegesis of Qur'an saying that the earlier *Mafassirin* (commentators) did not in any way inhibit him from developing new ideas of *Qur'an* nor was he bound by the opinions expressed by his predecessors in this field.
20. Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maraqat*, XI: 401. In addition to that, Sayyid Ahmad concurs with most of Muir's views for content analysis, i.e. the transmitters should not have a biased opinion as to the content of the Qur'an for they have no knowledge of the incident. *Ibid.*, 420
21. *Ibid.*, 420. In his *Adab*, he was not the first to do so, but he was the first to do so in a systematic manner. The above-mentioned excerpt from *Mawahib al-Laduniya* contained quotes from Qazi Ghayyas and Razi critical of his tradition.
22. *Ibid.*, 447–49. Almost one-hundred years later, Abul Aun Maududi adopted a similar way for his *Tafhim al-Qur'an* and even he was influenced by the Holy Prophet's recited Surah An-Naam and performed prostration at the end of it. At this, all the hearers, both the Muslims and the *mushriks*, fell down in prostration. This was what





- 4 Ibid., 154.
- 142 Ibid., 157.
- 43 Ibid., 58.
- 44 Mirza Asad Qasim Sarfraz, 'Assessment of Religious Texts (Quran, Sunna, Ibadat) and of Amir Ahmad and G. F. Von Grunebaum eds. *Adaptive Self-Stratagem in India and Pakistan 1857-1968* (Lahore 2004), 6.
- 145 Dr M. Ali Siddiqi, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan*, 190.
- 146 Ibid., 100.
- 147 *Maqalat*, VI, 124-34. It says that Ahmad himself agreed to a Muslim proposal that Umayyad-Abbasid rivalry and competition for power gave rise to a number of false traditions. Cf. Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, xxviii.
- 148 Ibid., 134. In 1883 while narrating the Bahá'í Káshá Sayyid Ahmad had made a similar statement. He pointed out that Muslims believe in *Bahá'ís* to be the most truthful book after Quran but fall short of following all those traditions which contradict their own Faith. *Maqalat*, XIII, 38.
- 149 Muir, *Life of Mohammed*, iv and lvii.
- 150 These principles were actually written in 1892 as part of correspondence between Sayyid Ahmad and Mirza Ali Khan who was Sayyid Ahmad's friend and a critic of many of his religious ideas especially in the case of the Quran. Cf. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's most genuine contribution to the discourse on Islamic reform and modern exegetical studies of Quran. For an English translation of Sayyid Ahmad's *Maqalat*, see G. F. von Grunebaum, ed., *Muslim Self-Stratagem*, 25-48.
- 151 *Maqalat*, IV, 253.
- 152 Naze Ahmad (1830-1922) another of Sayyid Ahmad's associate and important member of Allgadh Movement, believed that Hadith, insofar as it was in repugnance of Quranic injunctions, was to be followed. Other than that Hadith had relevance in a subordinate way. *Maqalat*, Ali and Siddiqi, *Islamic Thought: Ahmad's Perspective* (Lahore, 1971), 284-81.
- 153 Ibid., 29-30.
- 154 Ibid., 76-77.
- 155 Hall, *Hayat-i-Jadid*, 512-25.
- 156 Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan: 1857-1964* (London, 1970), 79.
- 157 Shaykh Muhammad Ibrahim, *Nadwat-ul-Shuhada* (Lahore, 1994), 72.
- 158 Shibli Nu'mani, *Nadwat-ul-Awliya* (Lahore, n.d.), 96.
- 159 Sir Mirza Asad Qasim Sarfraz, *Mirza Asad Qasim Sarfraz: An Exposition of Religious and Political Ideas* (Lahore, 1976), 65. The same position was taken up by Maulana Maududi in 1950s for which he suffered by his opponents as having a knack for estimating the temperament of the Prophet (*maayá shuhada-i-rasul*). For details, cf. Chapter 5 and 6.
- 160 Ibid., 61 and 70. His view about Amir Hanafi's report as a Mahadith was refuted by 'Abdul Aziz Rahimzadeh. Cf. Abdul Rashid 'Iraqi, *Chahar Ulama* (Lahore, 1963), 11. For all about Amir Hanafi's expertise of Hadith of Muhammad 'Ali Siddiqi, *Imam-ul-Awliya aur Husn-ul-Madani* (Lahore, 2005).
- 161 *Maqalat*, *Maqalat*, 33. Shibli could finish only two of the six volumes of his proposed book of Muhammad's life. He turned successful because Amir Hanafi had completed the work left unfinished by his men on. Shibli's Nu'mani's ideas about Hadith were more traditional than Shibli and so he tries to conceal Shibli's occasional criticism of *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. Cf. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition*, 65 n.



18. Muhammad Ali Meo—an Aḥl-i-Hadith scholar—also objected to Shāh Ḥaṣṣa as a historical source. Cf. Tuzq, *Chahā Uṣṣā*, 138.
62. *Tarīq-i-Ḥisām* is the title of the first of the four parts of a book that was written by Ismaʿīl ud-Dīn—a Muslim convert to Christianity. Hāṣi's text was published in 1870 and was the first of a series of books that were published by Ismaʿīl ud-Dīn. Other than Hāṣi, there were others as well who wrote in response to ʿImād-ud-Dīn. They include Chiragh Ali, Feroz-ud-Dīn, Dīkari, Muhammad Ali Khanpuri, Ikram Ullah Akbarabad, and Sayyid Muhammad Bharatpuri. Cf. Khalid, *Under the Sun*, 320, 75 and 377.
63. For a general introduction to the book, see the introduction to the book by the author, *Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999).
64. Guenther, 'Hadith in Christian-Muslim Discourse', 125.
65. *Ibid.*, 123.
66. Guenther, 'Hadith in Christian-Muslim Discourse', 12.
67. For a brief introduction to the book, see the introduction to the book by the author, *Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999). Cf. Dr Munawwar Hasan, *Mirza Chiragh Ali: The Muslim Scholar* (Lahore, 1977).
168. *Ibid.*, 212–13.
169. His purpose was to respond to European writers like Hāṣi, Chahā, Hughes and Sell. For this Chapter I have quoted from the Urdu translation of this book, *Asar al-Ḥaṣṣi*, 109–110.
170. Chiragh Ali, *Asar al-Ḥaṣṣi*, 17–18.
171. Ahmad and Von Grunbaum, eds, *Muslim Self-Statement*, 49.
172. For a brief introduction to the book, see the introduction to the book by the author, *Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999). Cf. Dr Munawwar Hasan, *Mirza Chiragh Ali: The Muslim Scholar* (Lahore, 1977).
173. *Ibid.*, 109–110.
174. For a brief introduction to the book, see the introduction to the book by the author, *Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999). Cf. Dr Munawwar Hasan, *Mirza Chiragh Ali: The Muslim Scholar* (Lahore, 1977).
175. For a brief introduction to the book, see the introduction to the book by the author, *Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999). Cf. Dr Munawwar Hasan, *Mirza Chiragh Ali: The Muslim Scholar* (Lahore, 1977).
176. *Ibid.*, 10–11, n. 1. This clearly is in line with the stance held by the ancients, Ali al-Qurʾān as would be shown in the other chapters. Chiragh Ali himself appears to be aware of the severity of his words. This is why he makes this statement in a footnote, and a footnote is not a place for a serious discussion. *Mirza Chiragh Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999), 109–110.
177. One example is to be found in his later essay on slavery. He considered the 'consensus' on the permissibility of slavery as grossly in violation of Quranic injunctions. There was no restriction on replacing the prevalent *qanun* with another *Adab*, IV, 535–36.
178. For a brief introduction to the book, see the introduction to the book by the author, *Ali's Interpretation of Islam* (New York, 1999). Cf. Dr Munawwar Hasan, *Mirza Chiragh Ali: The Muslim Scholar* (Lahore, 1977).

179. Q 2:193: And fight them until persecution is no more and religion is for Allah. But if they desire, then let there be no hostility except against wrong-doers.
180. Chiragh Ali, *Tehqiq-ul-Jihad* 54. This explanation is similar to the one given by Sayyid Ahmad Khan, *Maqalat* XI, 1: 277.
181. Q 9:5: Then when the sacred months have passed, slay the disbelievers wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them, and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor due, then leave them way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.
182. Chiragh Ali, *Tehqiq-ul-Jihad*, 64–65.
183. Wahidur-Rahman 'Chiragh Ali', 132.
184. Chiragh 'Ali, *Tehqiq-ul-Jihad*, 56.
185. *Ibid.*, 47.
186. Chiragh Ali, *Tehqiq-ul-Jihad*, 250–1. Sayyid Ahmad Khan simply holds the line that since the decision was taken by Sa'ad b. Mu'adh and the captives had agreed to accept his decision, hence this decision has no bearing whatsoever with God's commandments or that of his Prophet. *Maqalat*, IV, 509–10.
187. Chiragh Ali, *Tehqiq-ul-Jihad*, 237.
188. Chiragh Ali, *Jirga-i-Islam*, II (1), 75.
189. Halli, *Hayat-i-Javed*, 426–27.
190. *Amir-ul-Uloom Aur Hakeem*, 83–84. Even the most famous of all the apostates—Mirza Asad ul-Din—felt that he might not have given up his ancestral religion had he seen Sayyid Ahmad Khan's works at a time when he was trying to align himself within Islam. A. F. A. A. Jowett, "Mirza's a 'New Birth' Christianity in Late Nineteenth Century Punjab from the Perspective of a Convert 'from Islam' in Robert Eric Frykenberg, ed. *Christianity and Islam: A History of India's Cross Cultural Communication since 1500* (London 2003), 250.

# 4

## Towards a New Prophetology: Maulwi 'Abdullah Chakralawi's Ahl al-Qur'an Movement, 1900–32

### 4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the origins of Maulwi 'Abdullah Chakralawi's Ahl al-Qur'an movement in Punjab will be discussed. It will study the identity formations in Punjab in the context of British colonialism and the apparatuses of administration and patronage, among other tools of modernity, appended to it. The pervasive influence of the print media and discursive pigeon-holing of subject population by administrators, journalists and missionaries alike has also been taken into cognizance while discussing these processes. Special emphasis, however, is laid on the question of Muslim identity formation which has been brought forth in a comparative manner with similar processes at operation among the Hindu and Sikh communities. With emphasis paid to the particular case of Ghazi Mehmud Dharampal's apostasy, the imperative felt in the Muslim community for cohesive action for the protection of religious ideals and projection of Islam suited to the dictates of modern times and amiable to the concerns of college graduates<sup>1</sup> has been highlighted. The emergence of Maulwi 'Abdullah Chakralawi's Ahl al-Qur'an movement as an endeavour in this regard is, hence, explained in the chapter by foregrounding this historical-political context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Punjab where inter-religious polemics (mostly among the Muslims, Christians, and Arya Samajis) were being negotiated and disputed binaries of authentic versus inauthentic sacred texts, and the vulgarly versus morality of their exponents were brought into disputative contestations. This assists in explaining why Maulwi 'Abdullah Chakralawi proclaimed the Quran as the only Divine source of guidance for Muslim

books and services while the latter tend to be being followed by Aya Samaj and Sikhs with regard to the Vedas and Aids to them respectively.

#### 4.2. BRITISH COLONIALISM IN PUNJAB

With the annexation of Punjab in 1849, the British proceeded in accordance with the vision of selective benevolence expressed by the *Anglo-Indian* Section of colonial administrators of Punjab, to lay down a purposeful, paternalistic colonial regime supplemented with an imperialist law system. It was accompanied with the assumption of the responsibility for administering both the civil and criminal justice and a policy of bestowing political favours and economic opportunities on the basis of relative strength of a particular group of communities in order to thus demonstrate that enterprise was *beneficial* to the *British*. The British equated themselves with their subjects. The newly introduced practice of monitoring of the subjects' behaviour was one of the main features of the populace subjected within the colonising zone. It resembled caricatures with a sack of thuginess tied off and walked in the cauldron of imperialism. The knowledge archive was to ensure an abundance of *information* to the complexities of South Asian population and vagaries of its different sub-castes. In the heart of British administration was a well-planned and smoothly functioning of the empire. *Colonial* administration was of even more importance for an area like Punjab, an area which was a place of confluence. A delicate political balance existed between Muslims and Hindus while Sikhs harked towards the British. The British lost glory as the rulers of Punjab and Christian missionaries were free to claim this land for Jesus. The strategic importance of Punjab as the single most important recruiting ground of martial races for the Imperial Army and as fertile agricultural land with available potential for an acquisition of revenue have further served to highlight the importance of a stable colonial order and administrative setup in Punjab.

These rearrangements posed up a completely new range of opportunities and at the same time posed fresh challenges to communities inhabiting Punjab. The introduction of a new colonial administration in order with British ascendancy consistently gave rise to a broad new socio-cultural patterning and organisational structuring in the realms of social interaction and perception and group functioning among the communities. Old modes of interaction crumbled under the weight of

and political workings of the colonial regime. Alternatives to the British offering of a neutral public space were not used by them as a competing arena in which communities –constellated on the basis of religion, caste, profession and so on – would vie with each other for prominence or where existing subjects or rules of the game sponsored by the colonial authorities. In this way communities were oppressed even with the nominal power of the colonizer – both legal and political but never in Ranin Guha's words 'beginning to allocate resources, extend patronage, and administer law'.

As the British were attempting to identify their subjects and determine their approximate numbers, it became imperative for the communities under scrutiny to evolve effective means of evading and subverting the state's reach out – its colonial distribution of resources by capturing a modicum of the public space in order to protect traditional practices from making wrong gains. It was with the initial mapping of these communities the members then set out to grapple with the task of weaving a uniform outlook by rounding off variances and arbitrarily subsuming otherwise mutable, fuzzy, heterogeneous groups under a fixed

hasard. In a negotiation of identities, a common to give further impetus to the state's herd of new group and gains on the basis of religion, caste or other such identity and considerations. An additional source of map power was provided by the secreted Diaries in Revolution – was the emergence of community representative politics not only became possible but was also deemed to be desirable. A better communal infrastructure in the form of well connected railways and efficient postal system, outlasted the weakening of groups in numbers and maintenance of regular contacts. The advent of print afforded a new way of broadcasting one's views to a wider audience.

Accompanying these developments was the massive influence of the Western education system, proselytizing by government-run schools and colleges, which propounded a vague concept of rationality, in challenging the entrenched religious traditions. A perceived threat from the Christian missionaries, operating allegedly to combat with the British orthodoxy at some level, further heightened the mistrust of Parsi, Hindu, Muslims of religion – these Eurocentric notions of rationality and intellect became a threat – further religion appeared two pronged threats – indeterminacy, the cohesiveness of a community even used to defining its members and so bearing an impact on its socio-economic status and political relevance. A cumulative effect of these factors led to a questioning of a number of religion-based community groups' existence

among the Hindus and Sikhs of Punjab, with a concern for revision of certain aspects of faith or dilution among their clientele devotion of a more rational interpretation of religion to be well assured of the superiority of their dogma above that of the others. There was also a pressing need for appropriation of identities so as to forge unity among the community members and well its rank in comparison to others. In doing so, these communities were simultaneously being altered and created by colonial structures of power and knowledge in place, and their actions created intertwined chains of reactions from rival communities, hence embroiling them further in competition with one another.

### 4.3. THE BEGINNINGS OF RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES IN PUNJAB

When the direct takeover of Punjab by the British in 1849 came, one aspect of the colonial policy was witnessed by the Punjab's in the shape of an enhanced missionary activity since the first launching of proselytizing mission in 1834 – first initiated by the American Presbyterians and later by Church Mission Society, Methodist or Episcopal Missionaries and others. Within a few decades following the annexation of Punjab, these missions had expanded their work to emerging canal colonies and urban centres of Punjab like Sarkot, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Gunderpur Jhelum and Lyallpur among other areas. The setting up of a printing press in Ludhiana in 1830 by American Presbyterian Mission introduced an alternative and more effective means of mass dissemination of Christian scriptures printed in vernaculars throughout Punjab. Between 1861 and 1881 alone the Ludhiana press has published 42 editions of Christian scriptures in Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi numbering 188,000 copies in total, along with 286 tracts and books with a total print numbering 1,346,675 copies. Other than that, the missionaries established a number of educational institutes and hospitals in Punjab. The earliest missionary educational institution for boys was set up at Kargah near Simla in 1843 by the Church Missionary Society. The American Mission followed by establishing its first English medium school at Jalandhar in 1848 and in Lahore the next year – first as Christian College Lahore (formerly Lahore Mission College) and Murray College Sahiwal emerged as two important centres of western learning in Punjab during the late nineteenth century run by the Christian Missions.

Mission schools and hospitals along with freely available missionary literature in vernaculars, facilitated the missionary activity in Punjab and

allowed reaching out to especially those among the local communities condemned as outcastes—most importantly the *Untouchables*—by sweeping in the context of mass media influence in Punjab. For the menial and menial occupations they were associated with, the results were startling for the missionaries themselves: a 41 per cent increase in Christian population of Punjab was witnessed as their total numbers swelled to 19,750 in 1891. By 1911, their population had risen up to 163,994.<sup>1</sup>

The conversion of even outcaste members of a religious community was significant in overall impact since it diminished the total numbers of a community in the census reports and suggested a lack of egalitarianism, apart from their religious doctrines and absence of organizational apparatuses to prevent the conversions from taking place. Successive missionary attempts to prey upon learned and influential members of the communities was a further source of embarrassment as the local religious tradition is then raising doubts appeared unable to rationally satisfy the concerns of western educated graduates. Events like the attempted conversion of Sikh leader of Anand Mission School in 1873 or Bap Singh in 1874 of Mianwali, Hathi Nahi Bhabhi of Muslim High School Anand were of even more significance than the decennial publication of census reports. These cases aided in generating immense debate in the local press and widened in the intensity of polemical depictions taking place throughout Punjab between the clerical differences. The high-profile conversions indeed proved the image of Christian missionaries as establishing itself as a viable alternative in Punjab and, more importantly, a religion higher religion more suitable to the concerns of a humane and informed believer.

The challenge posed by Christianity to local religious traditions of Punjab clearly evoked similar organizational responses along with reinvigoration in work in areas of faith or challenge a successful counter strategy for preservation. In the context of Punjab, establishment of Arya Samaj in 1875 by Swami Dayanand (1824–1883) was indeed a significant development in 19<sup>th</sup> century religiousness, especially Hinduism as believed and practiced in Punjab. Dayanand tried to reconfigure Hinduism in line with the desires of a colonized society and was a religious rationality espoused by many among the upper castes. In Dayanand's concept of a reformed Hinduism, the scriptures of Arya Samaj was an emphasis on the Vedas as the source of central authority and authentic source of guidance for Hindu religion. The construction of the Vedas as Vedas served as a standard vision of a standardized Hindu belief system and was a new paradigm—of comparison to and a complete departure

for the history and of "spiritual benefits" of diverse practices in Hinduism, the vast stretches of South Asia – to which one could refer to be proclaiming to add new content – its own. In doing so, Dayanand was a pioneer of his reformer type on Vedas as an authentic textual representation of the Hindu religion, a counter to the established scriptural representation of religion like *Itihas* and *Upanishads*.<sup>10</sup> In Dayanand's opinion, "The Vedic such as it received... its pure form in the ancient past... undisturbed by later day and periods or foreign influences... was... retrieved and re-empowered by the *Upanishads*... All must read them and in its pure Vedic form and should the Vedas prove difficult to comprehend them Arya literature stood ready to explain and interpret them."

Other than complying with the tradition of textual representation in Sanskrit religious texts, Dayanand went further to rid Hinduism of its polycentric aspects targeted by the missionaries by arguing for a adherence to a rather monothestic concept of a single all-powerful deity. An editorial press, emanating from the missionaries and other religious communities with which Arya Samaj had to cope with were concerned by the role of the *Upanishads* ideas which were being attributed to Hinduism. One, Ram Mohan Roy, had sorted a way out by distinguishing between real Hinduism and the superstitious practices that determined Hinduism. Roy said that nothing had to do with the true spirit of its dualism in his view for a more realistic character of superstitions and Brahmanism dominated tradition of worship. Ram Mohan Roy ended up worshipping everything except Veda and *Upanishads*, which he decided to be the core of Hindu tradition, which in turn created a precedent for later forgetting of the Vedas by Swami Dayanand. But Ram Mohan Roy's successor, Debendranath Tagore, to put the idolatrous teachings of Veda incongruent with his own perception of a Supreme Being in Deity and abandoned – as he later of being an authority to his followers – *Upanishads*, *Sabhas* and *Itihas* to be replaced by reason and nature. On the other extreme were Sanatan Dharma groups who insisted canonical nature not only of Vedas but also *Upanishads*, *Itihas* and a host of other Hindu devotional texts – to argue in favour of more traditional form of Hinduism.

Swami Dayanand's belief in the Vedas as the sole authoritative source of knowledge and representation of Hinduism requires that all additional Hindu ways, uses or devotional life at religious sites or our *vidyas* need to be discarded. He rejected the teachings of Vedas and *Upanishads* as influenced by the south-eastern origin of its contents, non-Arya, local and other religious groups. As for the alleged polytheism, Brahmanized rituals



and maker of an any ethnic caste society envisaged in Vedic texts, Swami Dayanand resorted to a revisionist reading of these texts to make them conform to his scheme of a non-caste and de-Brahmanized Hindu religion with an egalitarian outlook. In this endeavour a reinterpretation of certain Vedic passages was as important as questioning the spiritual authority of the Puranas and other such texts.<sup>4</sup>

After viewing caste-based Hinduism as derived from the teachings of Vedas, it became possible to proselytize it as a distinct religion. Arya Samaj's arbitrary & constructed uniform Hindu dogma and reductive understanding of its various aspects narrowed down the definition of a Hindu to a person believing in the teachings of Vedas. The undertaking of evangelical missions was essential to appeal to the Hindu about their doctrines of their faith but was also demanded by political expediencies and economic calculations. There was a general dissatisfaction among the Arya Samajists—and most of the other Hindu groups or movements that cropped up during this period—about dwindling numbers of the Hindus as suggested by various reports. The weakening of caste and feeling of caste inferiority was witnessed as a phenomenon that had been in progress since the advent of Muslim rule in South Asia and escalating under the British.

With the teachings of Swami Dayanand serving as a rallying cry for a reformed, Vedic-only Hinduism and Arya Samaj being used as a platform and representative Hindu organization to propagate this new form of Hindu faith—a reversal of the conversion process was sought by targeting an audience comprising mainly of non-Arya Samaj Hindus or those who had converted to other religions among with Muslims and Christians.<sup>5</sup> That the proselytizing of Hindu religion was a pioneering accomplishment on the part of Swami Dayanand and Arya Samaj is evident from the fact that traditionally Hinduism had lacked a conversion ritual by the perception of a decrease in the numbers of Hindus in Punjab was a crucially powerful enough reason for novel methods of attracting new members to the fold of Hinduism. One such ritual was *Shuddhi*, or purification. One of the first recorded *Shuddhi* was performed by Swami Dayanand in 1877 on a Hindu of Jalandhar who had converted to Christianity.<sup>6</sup> The earliest known *Shuddhi* of a Muslim dates back to the same year. A Muslim from Dehli, Dun was administered with conversion rites by Dayanand and given a Hindu name of Akshidha.<sup>7</sup> On the whole, Arya Samajists were not without moderate success as their numbers grew steadily to reach 92,414 in 1901, though it still drastically short of a goal desired by them. The organizational expansion of Arya Samaj was

However, the impressive as the staff and branches spread widely to different parts of India, was able to establish schools and colleges imparting Vedic and modern education.

One of the communities most affected by the religious controversies raging in Punjab, especially the ones waged by Arya Samaj, was that of Sikhs. They not only had to cope with the recent loss of political autonomy in Punjab but also negotiate with threats to their existence as a separate religious entity. The Sikhs, like others, were being beset by the efforts of missionaries aimed at bringing about large-scale conversions and, in addition, faced an increasingly offensive challenge from the Arya Samaj's to subsume them under the category of Hinduism for religious and ideological purposes. The Arya Samaj literature was critical of several Sikh figures including Baba Gurmukh Singh but at the same time emphasised the mutual religious/spiritual ancestry of the two religions in various tracts published and published quotations held. Further incursions were made by Arya Samaj during the Swadeshi campaigns of 1900s when Sikhs, mostly from the lower castes, were converted to Hinduism in great numbers of conversions with many involving cutting of hair, a striking violation of Sikhism. A similar effort, albeit at a much lesser scale and thus as an exercise in academics, was made by individual Muslims who, to distinguish from Guru Nanak as a Muslim by citing credible historical evidence in this regard.

In response to their opposition, a report of a vaguely defined 'conference of Sikh religion and certain aspects of its teachings' had been varied in interpretations of Sikh religious traditions by its adherents. In the 1949 Punjab, there had already started a process of religious reform among the Sikhs as groups such as the Nirmalas and Namdhari army to revitalize Sikhism's devotional spirit among the believers in their own tradition were. But it was the year 1949 which first witnessed a rapid growth of Sikh organizations named as Singh Sabhas which dealt with various questions facing the community by providing fraternalistic groupings to promote a Sikh identity in accordance with the respective differentiated understandings of the Sikh tradition.

The first sabha was established in Amritsar in 1973. The purported aim of the organization was to restore the purity and glory of Sikhism, bringing about awareness among the Sikhs with the publication of books, tracts and journals. The Lahore Singh Sabha which held its first meeting in 1899 had a similar agenda but with a more reformist and pragmatic outlook. The Lahore and Amritsar sabhas, along with dozens of such organizations established in other parts of Punjab, bring about

themselves to be directly overseen by a larger central body of Khalsa Diwan established in 1843 or to be replaced by Chief Khalsa Diwan in 1802. By 1800 there were more than one hundred Singh Sabhas in Punjab and neighbouring areas with very unanimity on the question of deontic & Sikh and deontomaking Sikh religious traditions. They approached consensus regarding dietary, female education and caste system in accordance with their respective readings of the Sikh scriptures.

The issue of Sikhism's relation to Hinduism clearly seemed to be settling in favour of those championing a distinct Sikh identity to the loss of those who associated with Arya Samajis and other Hindus in seeing Sikhism as an offshoot of a broadly defined Hinduism and derived from commonly respected scriptural sources. This was made possible by organizations such as Khalsa Secret Society founded in 1894 which regularly published didactic and polemical literature, evidenced by references from Sikh literature to emphasize the non-Hindu nature of Sikhism.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the efforts in building a Sikh social identity (Singh 1992) and Jhanda Kaham Singh (ed. 1948) in locating and publishing old texts restoring histories unknown local histories (e.g. Guru Nanak *Pranam Sachis*) and ascertaining the relative veracity of those sources helped add to the confidence of the Sikhs in the veracity and richness of their religious literature and textualy restored deontomaking of its various traditions. And publication of Sikh literature with Singh Sabhas ensured that a third editions of *Pranam Sachis* and *Adi Granth* were brought out. It was this was Sikh Sabha-led initiatives for Sikhs evolved in the shaping of a recognizable Sikh identity affords an organizational momentum leading to the establishment of a number of schools and colleges for Sikh youth and opened up debate on various aspects of Sikh traditions in order to render it doctrinally compatible with the secular-religious milieu of colonial Punjab and at the same time pay the Sikh communities to undermine the belief system and practices of Sikhism. From the plurality of views that emerged from these discourses on Sikhism, the British, however, gave excessive and extended patronage to a rather narrow view of Khalsa Sikhs—who failed with projected image of the Sikhs as one of the major races of Punjab—for their own administrative convenience and fulfillment of colonialist objectives.

#### 4.4. MUSLIM REACTION TO RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSIES IN PUNJAB

The Muslim reaction to the religious controversies in Punjab was different, insofar as it did not involve a significant effort to resolve the problem of their distinct religious identity vis-à-vis Hindus and Sikhs. This does not, however, suggest that the Muslims of Punjab constituted a monolithic community or that religion alone defined their identity or determined the contours of community consciousness. Muslims too were a religious group constructed or perceived in the national textbooks as a community short enough with class, regional, linguistic, sectarian, and individual differences. Therefore, Muslims too were virtually cognizant of the dilemmas and challenges posed by national policy and movements of religious accommodation, and faced the brunt of opposition from rival religious communities, especially Arya Samajis, the dominance of their position and discourse on the idea of reform in religion was not so dissimilar from the rest. A number of voluntary organizations patronized by Muslim nobility and professionals came into existence to support modern and religious education of Muslims by building schools and colleges. They also became actively involved in religious disputations and wrote polemical tracts in order to forestall sporadic and haphazard attempts to bring the Muslims or to call them back to their original Hindu roots.

Against this background who posed a significant threat to the local religious traditions of Punjab, Muslim religious rhetoric with regard to Hindus was noticeably diversified. A number of mutually antagonistic tracts were exchanged after the publication of *Mutawassit Is Hindus Hindustan* by Bhaiyan followed by Maulvi Ubaidullah, a Hindu convert to Islam, who wrote *Jahle-ye Hindustan* in 1847. It was responded to by Munshi Ismail Khan in a tract *Jahle-ye Islam* published from Multan. A total of at least 15 tracts were exchanged between the contesting sides.<sup>14</sup> As this series of Hindu and Muslim tracts continued to fuel the fray by writing *Nasr-e-Islam* whose contents were considered potentially offensive to Muslims, Muslims started regarding their response. The fourteenth chapter of Durr-e-Ikhtisar focusing on the Quran and written by Mirza Asadullah Khan was not only an academic exercise in delineating the genuineness of their Hindu religions to underlie the Islamic philosophy as a universal religion, but also to reiterate the word-holiness of the Vedas as a divine scripture revealed to the sages of ancient times. In case of the Quran, Durr-e-Ikhtisar cited its teachings which allegedly were more logical and more

delivers sexual promiscuity, marital abuse and other age-old evils and shatters by emphasizing the importance of the Kaaba in prayer and pilgrimage performances. He concludes his criticism by saying that the Quran is neither the Book of God nor does it even qualify as the work of an erudite scholar. Muslim scholars responded in kind by raising objections against the Vedas and drawing evidence from its text to prove that the charges levelled against the Quran can more appropriately be levelled against the Vedas for its treatment of the same issues in an even more inhumane and irrational manner.<sup>6</sup> Dayananda's Vedic solution of *Anage* (widow) to the question of widow remarriage was in particular repeatedly exploited by his opponents with ridicule and satire as an example of the Vedas' irrationalities and hence a valid proof of its non-divine nature.

The religious debate had, hence, boiled down to an examination of scriptural authorities competing, elpased in the field of their historical veracity, rational compatibility and universal appeal. It was a invited fiery response from competing religions. Lekh Ram (d. 1897) an Arya Samaj propagator aggravated the religious differences by penning provocative literature against Islam and its Prophet. In doing so, he was responding to a spate of similar writings by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (the founder of movement, Ahmadia movement and other Muslim polemicalists). In dealings with his Muslim rival, Lekh Ram was concerned, enable to prove that Ved was the central exponent of Hinduism than its frequency the Quran as a divine text in a contrast with the criticism laid down by him. According to that contention, a Book, not to be devoid of supernatural elements, cannot be a human creation and our duty towards any particular community or group of followers in order to exalt the status of divinity. In addition to lack of a rational and universal strength, the Quran was considered by Lekh Ram as historically credible that the Ved as Lekh Ram. In this argument on the basis of reports found in both Sunni and Shia Ahadith to the effect that prophet Quraish had been lust in the same sex. Lekh Ram exposed a lot of him as a religion of murder, theft, slavery and perverts sexual acts" is derived from traditionally sacred Muslim text of various exegesis and other medieval theological writings. When criticised by his Muslim counterparts of sexual adulterances of Kishan with goddesses and virgins of various kind, namely Lekh Ram dismantled the criticism by re-emphasizing the Arya doctrine of dissociation from non-Vedic Hindu texts.



towards embracing Hinduism after he had convinced of the truthfulness of the Aryan principles of religion. By 1903 Ghazi Mehmud had turned twenty-one and so there could be no legal bar on him to formally declare his renunciation of Islam and conversion into Hinduism, and change his name from Abdul Ghafur to Chharampur. But Ghazi Mehmud objected to the term *Mushkur* being used in his conversion to Hinduism because it implied that he was being transformed from a ritual state of impurity to that of purity. With some reluctance, the Arya Samaj organizers of the event acquiesced to his demands and a mutually acceptable compromise was accepted. Also Ghazi Mehmud would not allow the shaving of his head as part of his conversion ritual. But conceding to this demand of his was to have led to criticism on the part of the Arya Samajists – the eyes of their ideal Hindu society. A compromise was reached whereby Ghazi Mehmud was to wear a turban in order to cover his hair.<sup>17</sup> The whole event was publicized well in advance so as to attract maximum attention and the incident was reported in the press as the living example of Arya Samaj's successful representation of Hinduism – was a rather theatrical display of ritual performances orchestrated by Arya Samajists with Ghazi Mehmud playing his part by reading out a lengthy polemical speech the teachings of Islam.

Ghazi Mehmud's charge sheet against Islam in his lecture titled *Darkness of Islam: Retrospect of India*<sup>18</sup> was a reiteration of the critique made by Swami Dayanand, it followed Dayanand's format of defining scriptures by quoting the Quran verbatim and then attacking the contents or interpreting it with satirical comments. His main thrust of a polemic against the Quran rested mainly upon his concepts regarding God, cosmology, supernaturalism, rights of women, Jihad and the Hereafter as described in its text.

In addition, he wrote a number of other monographs criticizing the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (c. 570–632 CE) and events relating to his private life along with material and other aspects of Islam. In his writings Ghazi Mehmud does not figure as an astute scholar of Islam or that of classical texts. In many instances his understanding of the Quran is either simplistic or outrightly flawed though effective enough to cause doubts among those believers who possessed a superficial knowledge of the Quran. His works were equally valuable for those among the Arya Samaj who sought reaffirmation of the superiority of their own faith with the testimony of a former Muslim. In consequence, despite the evidently flawed reasoning and deficient knowledge in Ghazi Mehmud's works, they were widely challenged by prominent Muslim scholars. In all





denounced by him due to their graphic details of the Prophet's marital life. He was also critical of the approach of the *Ulama* who insisted upon strict adherence to the minutest details prescribed by the *Shariat* or ritual observances of Islam. He considered it unnecessary to perform ablution or follow any systematic ritual order for the offering of prayers. In his view, the Quran sanctioned the believer to offer his prayers at any time and in any order deemed fit by him. That Allah Himself had refrained from specifying the details of *Namaz* was taken by him as evidence of the 'magnificence'. This clearly shows the proximity of his new ideas regarding Islam with those of some Ahl al-Quran groups, especially the one founded by *Shaykh Ahmad al-Libani*. *Ad-Dawani* is a *Ulama* who denounces Ahl al-Quran groups and called *Ulama* Mehmed Durrani as one of their members and that his apostasy came to an end because of a 'monogamy' with the *Ma'war*. *Abdullah Chakrawala* did not follow the number of Ahl al-Quran movement in Lahore and he first person in modern Muslim history to denounce Hanafi literature in this way.

#### 4.6. THE ORIGINS OF AHL AL-QUR'AN MOVEMENT IN LAHORE

*Ma'war* *Abdullah Chakrawala's* idea of the existence of the entire corpus of Hadith literature *unauthentic*, *Hadith* and exposure of the idea of Quran's comprehensiveness and excellence as the only required divine source of religious guidance for the Muslims appears for the first time in context of its nineteenth century religious context in the region of Punjab. Such an approach was in line with the growing need among the adherents of different religious communities in Punjab to specify the scriptural authority of their respective religions and insist that it was the only valid divine text. In case of *Ayaz Sahib* and several *Shi'ite* groups this endeavour was driven from a concern for reestablishing the basis of faith in a reformed world as much as it was inspired by the need to conform to Judeo-Christian civilizational norms of religion or to establish a distinct religious based identity which demanded to be different from the rest. In narrowing down the scriptural basis of religion whether to Vedas or *Adh Granth*, they did not simply seek a religious solution for the sake of believers but also a historically credible explanation that it could be derived from rational, human and universalistic principles. In case of Islam there was no ambiguity in the minds of believers regarding Quran's status as the final and the most excellent of God's Scriptures. What *Ma'war* *Abdullah* aspired for was strict adherence to the Quran alone as the only required source of religious guidance for the Muslims to the exclusion of

All other texts are secondary whether in the form of Hadith or classical Quranic commentaries and their spiritual and moral teachings are seen as paradigmatic, which—in the course of their authorship by men—suffered a loss of status with wider accepted authority among the Muslims. It has come to acquire a certain formal status, as with a real look into or direct reference to the Quran. This Quran-only approach was considered by Mather. Abdul Latif was not so distant as in that of Sa'ad Durrani and in 1874, 1875 he had named Hindustani when it came to defending the religion from accusations of inhumanity, sexual perversity and immorality. While Durrani and the founder of Arya Samaj, who tried to create a de-sectarian, like the Puranas for the objectionable texts of Muslim. And any reader who was raised mostly by such traditions.

[illegible][illegible]

a collection of Hadith which he was compiling and drawing from classical Tatar works and authentic Hadith collections.<sup>1</sup> That Maubw Abdullah continued to adhere to authentic Ahadith as late as 1847 is borne out by the fact that in his last sermon of 1847 published in that year while he was residing in Sakon he expressed the view that a number of Qura'nic teachings dealing with matters of belief and everyday practices were taught and explained by the Prophet for which it had been made binding for all to be obedient to his creation. He did this precisely at a time when following the footsteps of the Prophet, no one could come close to a genuine knowledge of what a human person may and should be doing, justice and balance in one's own life.<sup>2</sup> Even when he finally proclaimed the excellence and sufficiency of the Qura'an in the event of rejecting the usual prescriptions he seems not to have been opposed by a tradition from *Al-Bukhari* before Khwaja Ahmad al-Din Amirova<sup>3</sup> evoked upon him a charge by saying: "Even *Al-Bukhari* has reported it."<sup>4</sup> The fact that Maubw Abdullah is more of a fabrication on the part of his adherents is hard to prove but as *Le Monde* in India *had* to find it cannot be denied that Maubw Abdullah did not outrightly reject all Hadith in his own day, it appears that he had been planning to come up with his own version of Islam for some time. For this reason he had come under the attention of British police intelligence which regularly reported his activities from 1846 onwards. As early as 1840 Maubw Abdullah was reported to have been and again to be denouncing other Sunnis and in 1850 to have introduced new religious forms at the *Al-Bukhari* Mosque in Lahore where he had been setting up a substantial prayer reader for some years. This is what may be called a new Ahangzeb's monks, Nawab Sarfaraz Khan, and it is clear he was one of the most influential and clever leaders. As *Al-Hayat* said: After Maubw Abdullah's death, he made a public announcement of his heretical views, after a while he was expelled from the mosque. *Abdullah Khan* (a known scholar of the famous *Tabrizi* family of *Al-Bukhari* scholars of *Amir*) successfully brought about the expulsion of Maubw Abdullah from the mosque and replaced him with his own brother, *Abdullah Khan*.

His mission started when Maubw Abdullah while he was in the mosque at the *Al-Bukhari* Mosque destroyed some of the Muslim practices of reciting the standard prayer book containing the *Namaz*. He justified this act on the basis of the fact that he found in Hadith books for various instances of *Namaz*. The ones he had picked up, were Qura'nic verses and were common to all Hadith books and hence considered permissible by him as a *Shari'ah* law which was generally being

rejected by other Muslims. As the dispute became intense, the opponents of Ma'awiyya Abdullah started organizing their separate congregational prayers in the same mosque. This dual offering of Namaz lasted only briefly as Ma'awiyya Abdullah was soon expelled from the mosque and established one of his own in the nearby area.<sup>19</sup> The establishment of a separate mosque by Ma'awiyya Abdullah and his financier-disciple Shaykh Muhammad (Ch. 1, p. 1) took place in 1903 as they were erroneously reported to have started a new religion (which they refuse to acknowledge Muhammad (p. 1) as the Prophet of God and urge the disuse of the *Kalima* [the profession of faith]).<sup>20</sup>

Between Ma'awiyya Abdullah's public denunciation of major portions of Hadith in 1904-05 and his excommunication from the rest of the Muslim groups in 1902-03, he was engaged in written polemics with leading scholars of Ahl-i-Faith. Among the scholars who challenged his views, the most prominent one was Muhammad Husain Bhalawa—the editor of the famous Ahl-i-Hadith journal *Faith & Virtue*. In an essay published in 1902, Bhalawa detaches the ideas of Ma'awiyya Abdullah with the aim of rebutting them, and cited the sources in which Ma'awiyya Abdullah had borrowed from his opinion held by the majority Ulema for centuries. These included a detailed rebuttal of a Quranic verse, even the Torah and the Bible, sanctities of the prophets, and the reliability of narrations. With regard to Quran and Hadith, Bhalawa reported Ma'awiyya Abdullah's beliefs as follows:

Ma'awiyya Abdullah's opinions are as follows: I have taken the Quran with details and explanations. He is not interested in the Hadith which is not in the Quran, which is not to be found in the Quran or is in addition to it, then it is not worthy of trust. He denigrates the Prophet as a pariah and a person in the street. He is simply driven by passion, does not believe in the explanation and rights of the Prophet to interpret in matters of detail and interpretation of origin from anything other than the Quran.<sup>21</sup>

Neither in Hadith nor in Quran. Even Ahadith from *Bukhari* and *Muslim*. Ma'awiyya Abdullah has written *Kitab Hanafiyah* himself, among the books of *Faith & Virtue*, *Bukhari* and *Muslim* for many years. But the opinion of Ahl-i-Hadith who believe in the authority of *Sahih Bukhari* & *Sahih Muslim*, *Kitab al-Jawab*, *Kitab al-Bihar* and all the concerned books of *Sahih Sunan* deserve to be burned.<sup>22</sup>

Maulwi Abdullah's ideas about the comprehensiveness of the Quranic text and the non-describability of Hadith amounted to a wholesale rejection of the vast corpus of Hadith literature. Though it is well short of his more extreme views on this issue that took shape during the proceedings of his written polemic with Bataiwi. Up till the time of his polemic with Bataiwi, Maulwi Abdullah believed in the authenticity of some portions of Hadith literature. But his definition of authentic Hadith differed from the rest, insofar as he considered it as a statement or act of the Prophet related to some aspect of the Quran and not wholly separated from it. It was in the context of this definition of Hadith that Maulwi Abdullah ascribed to the Prophet's statements an equivalent status as an explanation of the Quran, and he placed his acts under the category of "surayih".<sup>5</sup> This definition did not add significantly to the status of the Prophet as a law-giver and actions as all the essential commandments pertaining to articles of faith and practices were in Maulwi Abdullah's opinion, comprehensively contained within the Quran, and that the Hadith did not add anything new to what has already been specified by the Quran. Hadith was dependent upon Quranic verses for the residue of its own history by way of a continuous link between the text of Hadith and that of the Quran. This led Maulwi Abdullah to conclude that the relation between the Quran and Hadith was more of an explanatory nature, while the working of the two may be different, but the content was essentially the same.<sup>6</sup>

The foremost question that immediately cropped up in the polemic between Maulwi Abdullah and Bataiwi was concerned with the religious status of those edicts which had been retained in Hadith alone without a trace of evidence to be found in any of the Quranic verses. Accordingly, Bataiwi challenged his opponent to elaborate upon his understanding of the stated nature of the comprehensive view of the Quranic text. In the case where the sphere of Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) authority in matters of belief was to be accepted and revered, then to be accepted that a variety of issues which had been left out in the Quran or at best in generalis terms had been elaborated upon by the Prophet with his divine inspiration and actions in the form of *asahib gram mawla*. Maulwi Abdullah's response could not have endorsed such a concept, albeit the authority of the Prophet and the inadequacy of the Quran in its coverage. He reiterated his views regarding the complete coverage of the Quran and stated its text as a repository of all his recommendations, which he had recommended as a superior religion above faith and religious practices. Nothing was to be stated or to be not

practice had not been covered by the Quran and none of its deta is required elucidation with the aid of external or supplemented literature. Hence, there was no requirement for Hadith or *waḥī ghayr muṭib*.<sup>1</sup> The Quran being an exposition of all things (Quran, 16: 89) did not need any extraneous exegetical material even if this material alluded to a contemporary practice (*amr al-mushābaha*) or an authentic saying (*amr al-hadīth*) of the Prophet. But as Maulwī Abduḥabī's erudite responses displayed, as well as he was cognizant of the fact that the comprehensiveness of the Quran could only be secured at the expense of limiting the essentials of religion to those matters alone which had been discussed in its text. The source was not only the authority of the Prophet that came under challenge but also the scope of religious matters of the whole that otherwise with the aid of Hadith encompasses a most complete range of human activities and directives of collective or individual instructions for bathing a dead body before burial.

It was simple for Batawī to expose the fallacy of an approach that left wide open the numerous gaps in several religious issues of a certain Muslimia in their country as a fact. Batawī drafted one such list of religious questions and stated that Maulwī Aḥmad alī provided Quranic answers in the *Ṣāḥīḥ*. Maulwī Aḥmad alī offered Quranic explanation for some of the questions posed. An example of this is the evidence cited by him regarding the permissibility of marrying one's sister maternal and paternal as well as paternal as long as it was the wife of the Quran prohibition concerning marriage with two sisters at the same time. It is from the faith that one receives guidance about marriages with other close relations of one's wife. In his response, Maulwī Abduḥabī Chakrawā referred to the relevant verse of the Quran (4: 23) and interpreted it to the effect that the stated prohibition was broadly extendable to a lawful marriage with any two women whose relationship with each other was the same in terms of intimacy and bonding. In the light of this interpretation of a verse, he banished marriage with maternal or paternal grandmothers of one's wife as well.<sup>2</sup> Even if Maulwī Abduḥabī had verified the meaning of his verse in the determination fixing it on was stipulated on a Quranic verse, there were many other questions addressed to him by the Ulama for which no Quranic verse could be found as even remotely relevant to the issue highlighted. For such issues about which no Quranic guidance could be furnished, Maulwī Abduḥabī only ventrally or cheerfully side by projecting them as not being of any direct concern or practice.

With Abdullah Chakralawi's theological challenge extending beyond disregard for *tarbiyah* practices and disciplinary mechanisms to be resorted during Namaz, Muhammad Husayn Batalawi showed real the opinion of his contemporaries (and a against the excesses of the former Ahl al-Ummah 'main' prayer leader). Batalawi had earlier taken the initiative in case of Mirza Asghar Khan's "in the latest allegedly false claim of 'apostasy' and brought about a consensus of Ulama to declare him a *kufr* (infidel). Batalawi made similar efforts with regard to Abdullah Chakralawi and his religious views. In a questionnaire distributed among the Ulama of Punjab and beyond, Batalawi asked for their comments on a person who blasphemously charged the prophets, especially Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a person only entitled to relay the message without adding anything on his own, thus a false prophet, infallible, and so on, etc., a charge with an utter disregard for his words and action as compiled and reported in Hadith. His actions (i.e., words & actions of all Muslim sects) in all areas (i.e., Shari'ah) including such statements as Sayyid Husayn Dhillawi were unanimous in their condemnation of Abdullah Chakralawi and his sect as he was branded along with his followers as a disbeliever although Batalawi himself was not an adherent to those religious doctrines observing that prescribed capital punishment for an apostate can only be inflicted on a Muslim ruler in Shari'ah and no individual was to be allowed such an undertaking.<sup>66</sup>

In 1913 Sharkh-e-Haq (Islamic Law) magazine had entered Maulwi Abdul Haq's available but limited number of followers in a court would near Lucknow. The magazine in the Sar-e-Wakeezah of Lahore. The magazine was also he requested by him to bring out a journal whereby he could broadcast his ideas on the Quran and Hadith. This journal led to the birth of the journal in 1913 and remained intermittent for a while, at least till 1917. It was published under the auspices of Journal of the Islamic Law with Maulwi Abdullah as its first editor and its mission as Ahl al-Quran. The stated aim of the journal was to disseminate the teachings of the Quran and spread the idea among Muslims that the Quran alone was sufficient for religious guidance. Later age offered by some nobles of a small Khan, especially Nawab Allah Daul Khan and Nawab Ahmad Khan, enabled Maulwi Abdulhaq to write, print and distribute various issues of Quran in a small number of the number of which we have reached out to a wider Muslim audience.

#### 4.7. MAULWI 'ABDULLAH CHAKRALAWI'S NEW PROPHETOLOGY

Maqbul Abdullah's historical views on Hadith had, in fact, further strengthened the case of the scholars opposing his views about the veracity of Hadith for it appeared to be forming a prophetic of Prophet Muhammad (s.w.a) who is reported to have remarked: "Never do I wish to see any of you returning to my tomb and elsewhere, as a nation out of my jurisdiction concerning that which I have enjoined them or prohibited them to do." If, as he says, I do not know what we have found in the Book of Allah we have followed. This Hadith has been quoted by numerous copies of Maqbul Abdullah's works among those who have alluded to the above quoted Hadith, came to have read it out in the presence of Maqbul Abdullah to prove to him that Hadith has a divine inspiration and an authority standing. When one such critic, Nur ul Din, narrated this Hadith to Maqbul Abdullah the latter is reported to have become angry and abused the Muhaddithun. But the contents of Maqbul Abdullah's writings suggest that an effort was made to present a positive image of the person prophesied in the above quoted Hadith. What has been described in the History is a mere one article in *Al-Hayat* in *Al-Jum'at* was a tape transcription of a copy of a man who held the Book of Allah in his hand when he died. The author is of the Hadith on the Prophet's death bed. The text in question could not have referred to any negative figure propounding erroneous beliefs.<sup>71</sup>

Such deconstruction interpreters of Ma'nawi Abdullah's teachings involves both by his proponents and opponents overlook the particular historical context which his reformation of Islam had sprung from. As already noted, Ma'nawi Abdullah was struggling to grapple with the scriptural authenticity among a diverse yet different faith and was also concerned about shattering Islam and its teachings from a slings of scepticism having that are sceptics on sources of Hadith and other classical literature on Islamic law, theology and jurisprudence. Hence in his overall vision of Islam, Ma'nawi Abdullah was seeking to rebuild and deconstruct the role of the Prophet and his role as source of teachings and sayings in his reformation. Ma'nawi Abdullah's rejection for propagating the importance of the Quran as the sole source of religious guidance derived from his perceived uncertainty of Hadith's reliability and accuracy of its perceived interpretation in terms of historical accuracy and veracity of its contents and message being a factor of complete misreading and evidence of the Quran as the only Divine text worthy of respect.



Like other ideologues of Ahl al-Quran who followed him, Maulwī 'Abdullah was not only the pioneer of a Quran-only approach to life, but also went a long way in meeting the challenge of placing prominent emphasis on all the essential beliefs and practices of Islam solely from the Quran to the complete exclusion of Hadith literature and other classical works of Fiqh and jurisprudence. According to Maulwī 'Abdullah, "the divine principles according to which the text of the Quran was to be understood and its supremacy over the rest emphasised. The idea of an Quran-only approach was premised on the assertion that the Quran is 'the divine word of God' which is 'the source of spiritual guidance and moral purification for all creatures of the universe'. Given its universalistic appeal and eternal relevance, it was only natural that the Quran had been furnished with all the required details necessary to this purpose. A necessary corollary of the stated premise of the Quran was the 'incompleteness of any translation in its messages regarding natural law and human institutions in human species were concerned, nor anything stated therein should turn out to be counter to known facts'.<sup>71</sup> Such a view about the content and reachings of the Quran, even of a devotee of it, who did not see any distance and an essential distinction between the messages of Quranic teachings and its historical, cultural, rational, and comprehensive use of its teachings regarding all aspects of faith and ritual.

At a time when Maulwī 'Abdullah had not come up with his counter-factual of the Quranic book on Quranic Names, his comments and observations were published in *Journal al-Quran* in the form of articles. These earlier writings for him were the very same articles later published works. Maulwī 'Abdullah began his treatise referring to verses that confirm the Quran is a comprehensive source of guidance for people in all spheres of life, and that it is the only guide to the Quran. Maulwī 'Abdullah found it illogical that a parallel divine authority should exist, or it amounted to making the significance or highlighting the inadequacy of the Divine source. Such a parallel guide was not necessary as a source to Maulwī 'Abdullah's, since he says the Quran did not allude to a source of faith other than itself (which is not emanating a parallel source of divine guidance). This accorded a Divine status to the Quran alone. As these verses what had been used by the majority of Ummah as clearing of a second type of Divine authority, an 'independent authority' independent to the direction of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Maulwī 'Abdullah introduced his deconstruction of the Prophet's role and authority in the context of Quranic teachings.

According to him, the explanations given of the Prophet practically implementing the dictates of the Quran was a misunderstanding/interpretation of verses that are quoted to be in accordance to this interpretation. There are three different sets of verses which are of relevance here:

1. Verses 16-44 which are interpreted as the Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s) to be cast in the mould of being the sole interpreter of the Quran, while in 'actual' sense, as understood by Maulwi Abdullah, these verses refer only to the normal Prophetic duty of informing the people about the Divine revelation.<sup>74</sup>
2. Another verse mentions the Prophet as the recipient of the Book and Wisdom, with the latter term understood as referring to his Sunnah. Such an understanding of the term *hikmah*, as mentioned in the Quranic verse, was disputed by Maulwi Abdullah on the basis of lack of supporting evidence from authentic Arabic lexicographic works and verses from the Quran itself, which on the contrary made use of this term in the synonymous sense of Book of Allah.<sup>75</sup>
3. But most important for Maulwi Abdullah and other 'reminded' individuals were those verses in which the Quran spoke in unequivocal terms of the new law coming by the Prophet.

That a religious authority had been ordained in Prophet Muhammad (s.a.s) by the virtue of his status as the Prophet of God, was dismissed by Maulwi Abdullah on two counts. It clashed with those verses of the Quran which barred associating partners with God in dictating religious edicts and contradicted Quranic image of the Prophet as a messenger without any special entitlements to impose religious commandments of his own.<sup>76</sup> As to the real meaning of the verse in question, Maulwi Abdullah disregarded the generally agreed understanding of the term 'messenger' in this context as a reference to the Prophet and insisted that the original meaning of the term was instead to be understood as referring to the Book of Allah. He justified this interpretation on the basis that verses quoted in support of Muhammad's authority were applicable to all the believers, including the Prophet himself. If this were so, he said, then the implication of this verse to be drawn was that the Prophet was excluded from all those verses addressing the community of believers as a whole. This was far from true, it absolving the Prophet from all those commandments including that of offering prayer and so on, which had

been made binding on the believers." Alternatively, if Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was to be considered part of those addressed in the verse, i.e. the 'messengers' of *Qayyumu l-bayyinah*, then it should be accepted that the Prophet was being commanded to be obedient to a source other than himself about whom no such hadith been given. This, along with the use of word *Kunūn* in the sense of *Book* in other verses of the Quran, led Muawi' 'Abdullah to conclude that Believers has been decreed to obey the only source of Divine knowledge, i.e. the Quran." Such an interpretation enabled Muawi' 'Abdullah to establish that there did not exist a parallel Divine source other than the Quran and helped define a diminished role for the Prophet.

[illegible]

Ma'ab. Abd alah's approach of the Quranic stories, hence, was aimed at projecting a public image of the prophet stripped of all elements from Jewish-Christian traditions and devoid of the supernatural elements with him entering his instance he did not believe that the flowers of Moses were sheltered from sunlight or clouds gathering above them nor did God send down fire from the heaven for their consumption. Similarly, in Ma'ab's Abulhasan's view Moses in Pharaoh's court found grace before the ruler not only because he was an extraordinary magicians who had been gathered to challenge him, but also because of the teachings he had received from God in form of the revelations to guide him and his appreciation of the Ma'ab, Abd alah's belief in the supernatural powers of the prophet becomes most clearly manifested in his case study focus in which he indirectly makes a satirical reference to Sa'ad Ahmad Khan and other followers of the law of nature for failing to appreciate the

miracles of Jesus birth and later events of his life and disbelieving in his second coming. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the second coming of Jesus on the basis of the Quranic verse (346) writes says: "He will speak to mankind in his cradle and in his manhood and he is of the righteous."

The prophecy of Jesus talking in his cradle while still an infant was considered by Maulana Abdullah as indicative of a supernatural act. The latter part of the verse however was understood by him as not referring to Jesus conversing with others as all normal individuals do after a certain age, but to his speaking to mankind on the Day of Judgement when he would manifest himself to them by coming into the open from his hiding abode.<sup>67</sup> A clear contradiction in Maulana Abdullah's concept of prophethood can be discerned in the sense that he invests no special authority to a prophet in matters of religion but they are considered by him as ordinary human beings, yet they are only he is not aware of the idea of prophet being endowed with supernatural faculties.

#### 4.8. QURANIC EXCELLENCE VS. HADITH INFERIORITY

Although Maulana Abdullah in his introduction to the *Ma'ad* mentions a consideration of the significance of the role of the prophet, he did not follow his radical revision of the role and status of the Prophet by an attendant written commentary of the historical role of the Prophet in a critical or consistent underlining that authority<sup>68</sup> Hadith literature were given a lower status in the writings of Maulana Abdullah through a reiteration

"the excellence of the Quran on account of its sublime style and its perfect authentic preservation, and to this theme he has evidence from and the Quran itself. The Quran claims a uniqueness of style and excellence of its text unmatched by any other work produced within its period of its own domain. It is viewed as the basis for Maulana Abdullah's arguments in favour of the Quran being the only source of guidance and Hadith not being inclusive in this category. He pointed out that in the case of Hadith the compiler enjoyed a moderate level of exquisite literary style, nor was the preservation of its text guaranteed by God. This has resulted in a wide scale fabrication of Hadith literature".<sup>69</sup> This theme was explored further by Maulana Abdullah as he developed opinions and reports regarding the historicity of the Quran and comprehensive review of its text and teachings.

According to him, the Quran has been compiled with all its verses and chapters put together in the present order as commanded by Allah and not simply assorted randomly in the span of a during the lifetime

of Prophet Muhammad (saw). He inferred this opinion on the basis of the fact that the Quran, on various occasions, it has referred to itself as a *Kitab* which according to Arabic lexicographic works, was applicable only to a written document existing in a compiled form. This proved that the Prophet did not leave behind an incomplete book in a manuscript form as he during his lifetime had noted down the whole books from the first alphabet till the last dot with his right hand and compiled it in book form. About the possibility of recording the revelations in a small sized palm-leafes which were being received frequently, Muawi'at Vazir narrated that the arrangement made in this regard was similar to that of the keeping of record books, blank pages were left out only to be filled later with the revelation of the ensuing portions of the text. With this view regarding the compilation of the Quran Muawi'at further mentioned he personally saw among them in the Quran text. The declaration of the existence of a forgery done with the help of Sa'id Ahmad Khan was extended to include earlier scriptures as well. In this question as to why certain verses of palm-leafes had been left pointing to their hidden form for a script and not for the latter ones, Mirza Abdulhik held the opinion that it had been done as a measure of punishment and also with the intention of modifying the Divine Will as such. When it came to explain Muawi'at that it was elaboration in a script his interpretation of the term *makul* or abrogation. He wrote:

According to Arabic lexicography a *Quran* is a collection of verses which also refers to a tentative arrangement. In the whole of the Quran there are many commands and prohibitions which have been implemented with the divine nature commands as well. Hence when due to situational demands and worldly requirements original commands are not implemented but their alternative commands are brought into enforcement. As conditions and situations change the alternative commands are agreed to along with the original commands. For example when some people are ill and unable to perform the act of eating and drinking they are permitted to eat and drink as well as stated in Quran. The ordinary people and those who are not observing the religious observances are allowed to eat and drink. The requirements of the *Namaz* can be observed or not. Even the requirements of ablution and bath are abandoned along with some minor prohibitions to be performed. During prayers, when *ruk'at* is established then all the conditions and means relating to *Namaz* are also restored. Hence, it can be concluded that some verses abrogate and supersede some of the verses regarding *Mohammar* which are being abrogated. So what abrogation means is simply a substitution of a religious command in place of the other on the condition that the first

command can, due to some temporary problem, no longer be abided by. Once that problem is no longer there, then the first command would regain its authority and validity as before.<sup>61</sup>

On the basis of such a formulation, Ma'uwi'Abdullah denied a historical as well as a theological possibility of deletions from Quranic text or late dating of its compilation to drive home the point emphasising the credibility and impeccability/historicity of the Quran (lack of contradictions in its text and in its reliability of its style). This belief in the comprehensiveness of the Quran along with reservations about the historicity of Hadith literature and aversion to succumb to the dictates of its contents – for reasons both ‘historiographical’ and ‘theological’ – were the distinctive features of Ma'uwi'Abdullah's Quran-only approach and the basis on which his version of Ahl al-Qur'an was founded.

#### 4.9. COMPREHENSIVENESS OF QURAN: TOWARDS A 'QURANI NAMAZ'

A summary dismissal by Ma'uwi'Abdullah of the necessity of reliance on works of Hadith and the resultant paradigm for details of faith and practices was theoretically guarded by a conviction in the adequacy of Quran to fill the ensuing information gaps about the religion of Islam. This approach was best demonstrated in one of his sermons where he observed that:

Muslims generally believe the Islam has five principles and laws: 1. Affirming the Unity of God and prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ), 2. Prayer, 3. Charity, 4. Fasting, 5. Pilgrimage. These are Sunna, Malik, Hanbali, Ash'ari-Hadith and Shafi'i etc. are all agreed on this. And all these sects believe in the Quran to be the word of God. But it is surprising that the same people also believe that except for the first article of faith the rest have only abstractly been touched upon in the Quran and that explanation and elaboration of these (principles) is to be found in books of Fiqh and jurisprudence. Had there been no Hadith and jurisprudence, the Quran would have been useless and an ellipsis. It would have failed to give details about *salat*, charity, fasting and pilgrimage. It is because the word of God does not repeat even the smallest of *ruk'at* in a prayer, nor the smallest especially the details of *ruk'at* for the Friday and *Jumu'a* prayers are completely lacking. Similarly, the timings of *Namaz* and positions standing as *rak'at* to be observed during *Namaz* and the respective salutations have not been elaborated upon in the Quran. According to his belief, the real essence of Islam on which hangs the success or failure of Islam and its life and welfare – the objective of which no one can declare

to meet as a Muslim and who is immediately relevant to the problems of religion—have not been encompassed in the Quran and so have a void of them. And whenever little details are to be found in the Quran, a Muslim will not and does not help in actual practices.”

Not effectively aware of Maulwi Abdulhaq's understanding of his arguments, beliefs about the Quran as the repository of general guiding principles and Hadith as a practical demonstration of the principles and how and an extensive application and interpretation of them, Maulwi Anwar Ali challenged such notions about the Quran and Hadith. His first line of argument was to mention which repeatedly referred to the Quran as a detailed exposition of everything and an exposition of all things in accordance with which all the decisions were to be made and practices adopted. Those responsible for failing to script were to earn Allah's wrath and had to be tagged as unbelievers. According to Maulwi Abdulhaq, Muhammad (saw) himself was the explanation of these instructions. Simply put, what was inspired to him without being the source of change, most of them is contained in the Divine text. But, he would not mention the source had been what was inspired, sayings and actions, instructions from the days of earlier prophets in details of Nizam and other routine practice included as a supplement. Every Muslim, Maulwi Abdulhaq pointed out, was the extensive Muslim who did not depend on Hadith for details of Nizam. He exposed the ambiguity of such a belief by asking the question about the mode of inspiration, whereby, the Prophet was enlightened as to the form of Nizam. He argued that Allah's inspiration was direct, without the issues and various prayer positions, many variations of details, verbally. While the two players of exchange were not had not to him as a revelation, the latter one gave rise to his observation that the same revelation could have been incorporated in the Quran. A responsible substance of such details contained and a single script in the Quran is not what Maulwi Anwar Ali's ambition is look for the details of Nizam in Quranic content. He trusted upon the Quranic text for the source of a fully developed system of an intelligent and credible commanding a theme and a hand to him in Quran, which it is an exposition of all things were provided enough that all the social religious details had already been described in the Quran with great elucidation.

Hence, looking for details of Nizam was not relevant for Muslims. One should constantly protect since it was most integral to Muslims, every action, given activity and required, case, specified or not, if

minor details than other Muslim practices. This, notwithstanding, has served as a better second line of argument in his case for the incomprehensiveness of the Qur'an as a practical demonstration of its adequacy in matters of details to the exclusion of Haddad and the authority of Prophet Muhammad as a source. For his purpose Ma'awiyyah Abdulah composed a voluminous book in which he took great pains to detail all acts of prayer including details about the number, timing, prayers and *ruk'at* (movements with a prayer), recommended salutations and body postures to be maintained during the offering of prayers. A detailed enumeration of Ma'awiyyah Abdulah's *Ma'awiyah Qiyam Namaz* is required in order to understand the principles of Qur'anic exegesis and semantic methodology<sup>10</sup> adopted by him to derive Islamic principles and facts and practice from the Qur'an. These ranged from the contextualising verses or repeating the repeated messages of a particular verse, a verse involving complexities of Arabic grammar and rhetoric or interspersing translated passages with statements favourable to purported claims about the Qur'an.

From the beginning of his career Ma'awiyyah Abdulah acknowledged as he had done in his written poems with Muhammad Haddad, Banna, and others, that he greatly is indebted to the great knowledge of Namaz of his compatriot produced by tradition or habit or not referred upon by a call offering of the rivers and, hence, they are better known than the Qur'an with its technical details. The technical details of offering prayers were thus left up to the sensibility of the people. Not much elucidation was required than what had been already specified in the Qur'an (50: 40) in connection with the chapters of the Qur'an (50: 41) namely the conditions which made it mandatory for the worshipper to have prior to offering his prayer been mentioned in the Qur'an (2: 43 and 2: 221) without any further instructions about the procedure to be adopted to attain such a state of purity through bathing.<sup>11</sup> Another matter of preliminary concern was the timings of the five daily prayers which according to Ma'awiyyah Abdulah had been specified in the Qur'an, verses (1: 14 and 1: 15). In the latter verse<sup>12</sup> the word *dunya* i.e. reckoning of the sun from the morning specified the prayer timings for two prayers during the day and one before sunset, the word *ghaibiyah* i.e. evening prayer, the prayer by Ma'awiyyah Abdulah as a reference to the *Isha Namaz* (night prayer). The morning prayers was mentioned by the Arabic word for morning, *Fajar*.

The five daily Qur'anic Namaz according to Ma'awiyyah Abdulah was *qiyam* and was similar in nomenclature to that offered by other



Muslims, the worshiper was to stand in an upright posture facing the direction of the Kaaba while grasping both hands over the heart, as if invoking Allah's greatness. This served as a formal and appropriate commencement of a complete act of submission to the Name in which every human organ, by one action or the other, expressed its humility before the Lord. This was implied by such actions as folding of hands during *qiyam* or rubbing the nose on the place in *sajdah* prostration. Similarly, ears were to be grasped as a sign of one's meekness. For a Quranic justification of his innovation that he had introduced in his prescribed form of Quranic Namaz, Maulwi Abdullah alluded to the following Quranic verses: Say: Have ye imagined if Allah should take away your hearing and your sight and seal up your hearts? Who is the Allah? Who can restore it to you save Allah? Verily how We display the revelations unto them! Yet still they turn away. (Quran: The explanation that Maulwi Abdulaziz provided for the above verses was as follows:

[1] *Pray ye! Say [to those people who do not believe in you] "Allah sends down revelation unto us, who do not grasp men's ears, do not prevent men's eyes from looking on, and who have no fear of God in their hearts." Tell me, after invoking "O God grasp your ears, enlarge them, and your eyes, make them see, and hear, your hearts, hear, who do you have but God to return them to you?" Since there is no one, and better grasp ye ears in prayer, keep your eyes from wandering, and maintain the fear of God in your hearts.]<sup>20</sup>*

The next step in Quranic Namaz required the worshipper to raise his hands above the navel as a mark of respect, and to maintain and recite 17 verses of the Quran to inspire upon oneself the need for spiritual growth and concentration in the offering of prayers. In line with the normal Muslim practice the worshipper was to recite the first chapter of the Quran, the *Fatiha*, in his prayer. To support an evidence for this recitation from the Quran, Maulwi Abdullah made a vast (ca. interpretation of another Quranic verse: "His translation" of Quranic 15:87 which he added to it in parenthesis, read:

And verily We have given to you seven verses (of great *Fatima*) which deserve to be recited repeatedly in the prayers and these verses are a great summary of the whole content of Quran, and thus you should render what is due on you as thanks for this bounty that is *Fatima*. Say: Raising it in each legmen of every prayer and do not be disturbed by the slanders of the infidels).<sup>21</sup>

In the general recitation of prayer themselves by Muslims, *Qasida* is followed by recitation of verses from any portion of the Quran. Unlike other scholars who cited a *hadith* of *sunna* (having a practice) of the Prophet to support on recitation. And for all the other segments of the prayer, Maulwi Abdullah referred to Quranic verses 3:20 and construed its meaning as “recitation of four verses during prayer” in order to wherein it denotes. Such an understanding was based on the presumption that Qasida could not have referred to recitation of Quranic verses twice in the same prayer without there being any difference between the two. This difference in Maulwi Abdullah’s opinion becomes evident if one appreciates the idea that the first half of this Quranic verse points to the recitation of *Qasida* at prayer while in the latter half recitation from any portion of Quran since *Qasida* has been commanded in prayer.<sup>11</sup> He went ahead to follow the pattern of a *namaz* as usually observed by Muslims in their prayers as he cited verses 107:13 to describe *rukua* as a worship position known as the next name of Quranic *Namaz*. Even though a number of verses were known to be observed during *Namaz*, none gives details about specificities of its ritualistic posturing. This was attributed by Maulwi Abdullah to the familiarity of Arabs with the concept of *rukua* he said “as well as other details regarding its performance were unknown”<sup>12</sup> The same verses were used by Maulwi Abdullah for elaborating upon the performance of the two prostrations *sujda* (sujdah) and *qasida* (qasida) in each other which is in order, the first *rukua* (segment) of *Namaz*. This was to be followed by the second *rukua* but with the difference that after the recitation of the which prayer was to be on prostrates with knees touching the surface of the carpeting, a full standing posture was adopted *qasida* in a manner and verse 107:13 recitation by reciting surahs of the prophets and verses for himself. The Quranic *Namaz* is the conclusion. After four recitations of *Qasida* followed by recitation from any portion of the Quran, salutations (sajdah) by Maulwi Abdullah for seven prostrations of *Namaz* were observed from the Quran although every verse in prostration of submission and obedience to the Will of Allah in *rukua* and *qasida*. He observed and between them. Besides salutations, the difference in Quranic and conventional *Namaz* was the fact that there was no formal repetition in Quranic *Namaz* but between the *namaz* (prayer) and *qasida* (no standing) of other worshippers during congregational prayers.

To settle the tricky question of the number of *rukua* to be offered in the daily prayers, Maulwi Abdullah referred to Quranic verse

4:111-112 which deals with the observance of ritual prayers during war times. Under such circumstances the Quran prescribed that the fighting army be divided into two with one offering a single *rakat* behind the *imam* and then moving to the rear to make room for the other group to offer a *rakat*. In this way, the *front* and *rear* were to offer two *rakats* in total, that there did not exist any difference between the prayer made and those who prayed behind him was used by Maulwi Abdullah to deduce that two was the number of *rakats* to be offered in prayers during the period of combat. To this number he added the *Qasr* formula (Quranic principle of relaxation whereby an actual commandment or obligation was reduced to half of its original intent in times of emergencies). Hence, the actual and maximum number of *rakats* for normal Namaz was to be double its true agency specific number of two. On the basis of this logic, the number of *rakats* were arbitrarily reserved for different prayers of the day by Maulwi Abdullah. The number of *rakats* was to be in accordance with the relative ease or difficulty of the situation. This ease or difficulty was dependent on the time of the day reserved for the observance of that particular Namaz. As was pointed out by Maulwi Abdullah, it was easier to offer the two prayers during the middle of the day and the one late at night than that in early morning or at sunset. In accordance with this formula, he showed that the set of four *rakats* was to be observed in the three prayers during the convenient hours of the day while for the remaining two prayers half of that number sufficed.

A similar formula was adopted by Maulwi Abdullah while deducing Quranic injunctions regarding Zakat. In a separate tract on 'Quranic Zakat', he distinguished between two types of self-earned wealth. On the first type, that was earned with charity case, one-fifth was to be paid as charity. But the second type for which one toiled hard and sweated his blood, only one-tenth of it was to be paid as charity. This was also in accordance with Maulwi Abdullah's interpretation of the Quranic understanding of the Quranic principle of *infaq* with regard to some measure.

When Maulwi Abdullah Chakdawi's book on Quranic Namaz was published after its completion in 1925, it elicited a host of adverse reactions. The negative responses were basically centred on suggesting that Maulwi Abdullah had introduced several modifications in the established formula of Muslim Namaz without preserving the traditional sources of religious guidance like Hadith and Fiqh. Even in cases where the Quran supported his version of Namaz, Maulwi Abdullah had unabashedly resorted to stretching his meaning and intent of Quranic verses to extend them to

as to demonstrate a direct interference. Furthermore, was not it known of the possibility of a backlash to their inquisitorial ideas? He presented some of the reasons for asking people to change their behaviour by observing that those involved in criticizing Quranic Narratives were following in the footsteps of the companion and prophet Shu'ayb who refused to utter the prayer prescribed by the Prophet for they did not want to forsake the ways of their ancestors.<sup>21</sup> An incident of this kind was made by Saadullah Amir (as he questioned the authority of the ways of which Maulana Abdullah had made the selection and the translation order) of Quranic verses for recital during Namaz. He argued that if in doing so, Maulana Abdullah had used his personal arguments then the same right must be extended to everyone. Or alternatively one should accept the prevalent form of Namaz as prescribed by Prophet Muhammad and should follow the instructions of Maulana Abdullah who is clearly authorized to his version of Quranic Narratives which was the path expounded in his works and practically established by him in the Syrian Wala mosque in Lahore.

Even these arguments were not enough to convince him of the future of his efforts. Even people like Khwaja Ishaq Ali Amrohi were not able to convince him to keep the existing form of Namaz intact. Such a lack of success led him to the idea of Maulana Abdullah to the extent of his own founded academy of Islamiyat has also been reported by Amir as a person who met him in Lahore in 1904. At the time Amir himself was unsure about the relevance and authority of Hadith literature and even though he admitted his own over-reliance on Maulana Abdullah he was an impressed with his argument and method of approach.<sup>22</sup> Even Maulana Abdullah's direct descendants were not pleased to the name of the society. His son Ibrahim Chakrabarti did not train as a Ahl-e-Hadith scholar was disinterested by Maulana Abdullah's refusal to revise the Ahl-e-Quran. Maulana Abdullah's grandson Maulana Isma'il (1918-2000) was known as a committed Ahl-e-Hadith member throughout his life and was actively engaged in Ahl-e-Hadith organizations and madrasas in South Punjab. There was no success in any reforming efforts or advice given to the Ahl-e-Quran movement. Maulana Abdullah left Lahore for his hometown Chakrabah before his death in 1916.<sup>23</sup>

Although Khwaja Abdullah's writings had an influence in the larger discourse of reform in Islam, yet he failed to attract a large following. Without any disregard to the discursive impact and outreach of his written works, a long-term analysis alone for substantiation can be inferred that the number of those who self-consciously identified

themselves as Ahl al-Qur'an never crossed beyond the limit of a few hundred during the lifetime of Maulwī Abdullāh or after his death. In a census, his disciple Shaykh Chaurānā appealed to members of Ahl al-Qur'an not to register themselves as Sunni or Ahl al-Hadīth but as Ahl al-Qur'an. This appeal did not elicit the desired outcome as only 271 members of Ahl al-Qur'an were entered in the census for the year 1919 from Punjab. Their strength in individual districts of Punjab was reported as follows:<sup>140</sup>

District	Persons
Ludhiana	7
Lahore	62
Sialkot	20
Cumrauwala	12
Gujrat	61
Jhelum	6
Mianwali	-
Lyaipur	1
Faisalabad	1
Multan	51
Panvala State	16

Even with such a limited support base, organizational strength and resources, the Ahl al-Qur'an group, founded by Maulwī Abdullāh Chakralawī managed to prolong its existence for a few more years – at least till 1932. After his death, the organization was guided by Maulwī Hashmat ‘Alī Khan Lahaurī. دہلیوی

#### 4.10. AHL AL-QUR’AN MOVEMENTS AFTER MAULWĪ ‘ABDULLAH CHAKRALAWĪ

After the death of Maulwī Abdullāh, the so-called organization of Ahl al-Qur'an followers established by him briefly lapsed into inactivity. Their activities, however, resumed with the arrival of Maulwī Hashmat ‘Alī Khan Lahaurī (c. 1856-?) from Delhi who established himself as the new *Imam* (prayer-leader) at the Siryan Wala mosque and stepped into the shoes of Maulwī Abdullāh as the chief ideologue of the Ahl al-Qur'an group of Lahore. The publication of *Ishtāq al-Qur’an* was resumed after a gap of almost five years.

The origins of Ma'uwi Hashmat Ali Khan Lahori—nicknamed the three-day Maulvi by Sana'ullah Amritsari on account of his habit of fast—were even more obscure than that of his grandfather. The only available information about him suggests that he was born in Gurdaspur in the Punjab and read at a library for a long time where he came under the influence of Mirza Asadullah Chakrabarti's religious concepts through Abdullah Khan, deputy superintendent of Madrasa in Delhi.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the demise of Asadullah Khan Lahori's chief ideologue and the limited resources at the disposal of the organization, Ma'uwi Hashmat Ali Khan Lahori did well in contributing his share to British colonial polemics regarding the Prophet and Hadith.<sup>11</sup> He shared Maulvi Abdu'llah's estimation of a negative impact of the teachings of Hadith on the Muhammadan community. Muslims seeking a rational explanation of religious ideas were disappointed that crude age-old Hadith were occasional incidents of Muslim conversion to other religions. One such explanation came from a Muslim named Sayyid Abul Kadir,<sup>12</sup> having been a noble religious figure converted to Christianity and became a Christian. He described the change of religion as a tradition dating back to the time of Adam and his creation of the world. Such a tradition about a God who described Adam as sitting on a Throne and hence giving a special revelation of his commands and His Prophet's period and mission were accepted as a tradition in a series of articles penned by Ma'uwi Hashmat Ali. He converted the content of such Hadith with that of the Qura'n with the purpose of reconciling the seeming gap between the two. About the historical value of Hadith, he like Maulvi Abdu'llah did not undertake a detailed critical enumeration and analysis of their veracity and not comment on their utility. He referred Hadith literature which were compiled much later after the Prophet's death. Maulana Muhammad Ali in 1953 stated that he travels—about generals of the Ahlul-Bayt sect collected and collected arguments against Hadith and refuted them in a series of his work on Hadith studies.<sup>13</sup> Ma'uwi Hashmat Ali took a specialized knowledge about Hadith sources was reflected in his inability to reply and respond to Muhammad Ali's arguments other than by suggesting that his recent discovered manuscripts were all forged to deceive the Muslims.

Against the usual estimates and characterizations by some Muslim groups, Asadullah Khan of Islamic Center Ma'uwi Hashmat Ali was not

with opposition from new entrants into the fray. Shia scholars<sup>14</sup> and *Ahl al-Quran* groups. It was hardly surprising that *Ahl al-Quran* or persons of Ushaybiyyan descent *ho kham khush Allah* (the Book is Good is enough) and their criticism of collections of Hadith respected by the majority of Sunni Muslims were referred to by some Shia scholars in preference with their Sunni counterparts to stress the charge that these traditions were marked by the name of Islam. What concerned *Ahl al-Quran* more was the use of epithet *Chakralawi* with which followers of Maulana Abdallah Chakralawi were labelled by their opponents—for Umar. It was because Umar, in using the slogan of sufficiency of the *Quran* had, according to some Shia scholars, become the first person to lay down the principles which were later elaborated by Maulana Abdullah. In this sense, Umar was the first of all the *Chakralawis*. Even though Maulana Hashmat Ali had repeatedly referred to Umar and his statement as a power argument in favour of his own creed, he could not avoid it by acquiescing to such a labelling of him as a *Chakrawali*—a term loaded with negative connotations. According to Maulana Hashmat Ali, Umar's statement was not a defence of his own claim that he was the last of the divine claims of prophethood and ignored the other 4 companions who were present into silence. He could not have prevented or using of the issue of the Caliphate in Ali's favour as prophecies were not considered by any prominent or truthfully conveying the message of Islam. Therefore, it is safe to say that Umar made this statement to affirm and proclaim his true faith and did not intend to use it as an argument for a request for acquisition of power from Ali as believed by Shites. The tag of *Chakralawi* for Umar—intended as a slur—was, hence, not justified.

During 1970s other *Ahl al-Quran* groups appeared on the scene whose views were not exactly the same as those espoused by Maulana Abdallah. Many of these groups were rather short-lived and revolved around a central figure. One of the most significant contributions to the subject of Hadith and the Prophet, Mirza Sahamuddin Raza (1908-1990) and his *Ahl al-Quran* organization, based in Gujranwala, was *Al-Furqan* (Example).<sup>15</sup> During 1973-75 the *Al-Furqan* also issued a journal titled *Dawate-e-Quran*. Mirza Raza was a student of Maulana Abdallah and in many of his writings he borrowed directly from latter's works, especially when he used such the terms as *Khamr* (Merrymaking), *Al-Furqan* (Book of the Quran), *Chakrawali*. His major disagreement with Maulana Abdallah was, however, with regard to some details of *Quran*. Mirza Raza was not a true *Ahl al-Quran* insofar as he was not in this respect. During the last days of Maulana Abdallah's lifetime, he

Haider was a from Wazirabad. After Inayatullah had come up with the view that only three prayers were established by the Quran. According to Sayyid Rahmatullah Muneer, another independence *Ahl al-Quran* the number of daily prayers was neither five nor three but between the two figures.<sup>1</sup> Miran Muhammad Bakh of *Ahl al-Zakat* and *Quran* U. Rahim District in 1920, in contrast to Sayyid Muneer, elaborated upon his own version of Quranic Namaz. Among other criticisms that he raised about the traditional concept of Namaz, he also pointed out the problems inherent in recitation of Quran verses during Namaz. According to him, most worshippers with no understanding of Quran Arabic text recite verses like the ones dealing with issues of dowry, since even that have no relevance with the intent and purpose of Namaz. He therefore recommended specifying the chapters or verses for recitation during Namaz. For Mahmood ul Din Quraishi, a contributor to Amritsar-based *Ahl al-Quran* journal *Intiqad*, Namaz was simply a way of entering into contact through the recitation of the Quran so as to promote an understanding of its text among the believers. According to Miran Muhammad Bakh, the number of prayers prescribed by the Quran were three. He noted that the Quran has specifically mentioned the names of morning and night prayers as *Fajr* and *Asr* respectively, while for the mid-day prayer he would *namaz* has been used in the same verse. He felt the two prayers and their names he copied had been derived from comparison of Hadith by many books and Muslims. In his version of Quranic Namaz, Miran Ramazan recommended recitation in a *musallam* (i.e. Rabb ul Musallam disallowed the practice of raising of arms during *qiyam* (standing position in prayers).

A few changes made by Miran Muhammad Ramazan were highlighted by Maulana Iqbal Khan on the grounds that the former was a disciple of Maulana Abdullah Qasabulawi and therefore believed in all his religious teachings. On a few occasions, however, differences both were invited to discuss by Rahmatullah Muneer in Dera Ismail Khan in November 1920 but to no avail. The clash between the two was more personal than ideological. Maulana Iqbal Khan could not tolerate rivalry between the spirituals of *Ahl al-Quran* whose main focus was to spread *Ahl al-Quran* groups operating on a very limited scale in different cities of Punjab including Gujranwala, Jhelum, Multan, Sheikhupura, Dera Ismail Khan, the North West Frontier. This was because in his opinion, the Lahore branch was the parent organization whose funds and resources had overcome the great dangers to establish *Ulama* a



and he expressed similar views during an annual meeting of Ahl al-Quran followers convened from all over Punjab in Multan and Ramazan.<sup>42</sup> In his response, as expressed in several writings, Master Ramazan refused to acknowledge the hegemony of the Lahore chapter of the Ahl al-Quran or to become its subsidiary organisation. He announced that he would be attempting to protect Ahl al-Quran Gujranwala as the real heir-hear of true Islam and accused the rest of colluding with Ahl al-Hadith in dissemination of tradition-based Islam.<sup>43</sup>

While Master Muhammad Ramazan's challenge played out gradually, Ahl al-Quran Lahore had to continuously face a much serious issue of a pending, illegal battle for the possession of its mosque in Sarraf Wala Baza. The mosque that had been in use for observance of Qur'anic Namaz by Ahl al-Quran Lahore had become a centre of controversy even during the lifetime of Master Abdullah. In 1903 Sheikh Sultan had purchased a house worth Rs. 25,000 and executed a *waqf-nama* (deed of endowment) in favour of Ahl al-Quran and himself, so that he could stay at the mosque. It was decided that it was to be used for the *waqf* was to be used upon after Sheikh Sultan's death. Some other persons too had contributed funds for the purchase. They were involved in *Chirkas* and other legal disputes for the property for himself. As a result, he was expelled from custodianship and forced to submit a revised and more complete *waqf-nama*. In 1915, when custodianship was handed over to the persons, since the original *waqf-nama* included a directive that a mosque should be created to carry out the objectives of the *waqf*, a newly appointed custodian tried to procure a site for the building of one but the efforts were thwarted by other Muslim mainstream groups who were not in favour of the establishment of an Ahl al-Quran mosque. It was then that it was decided to seek the help from Shaikh Sultan who had considerable wealth and influence. But as Custodian, he had possession of *waqf* property. He again began to encroach his personal assets by attempting to assert his right of ownership. He even tried a part of the house as his residence in 1909. For these acts, Sultan was removed from custodianship, and although he accepted his dismissal, he wrote a statement in June 1909 but he continued in his efforts for wresting possession of the property through legal means.<sup>44</sup> A suit was filed by him and was followed up by his heirs but it was turned down by lower courts before its final dismissal by the High Court in 1920.

In their petition, the legal heirs highlighted the plea that the execution of the *waqf* had been contingent on the construction of a mosque which had not taken place. The Court dismissed the plea on the



abandonment of a woman.<sup>59</sup> Haji Umar ud Din and Qari Ahmad ud Din assumed charge as the secretary and president of the organization respectively. But with Maulvi Hashmat Ali's *discommunication*, Ahl al-Quran Labores even marginal existence soon came to end and it swiftly slipped into oblivion without a trace.

#### 4.11. CONCLUSION

This chapter has introduced the figure of Ghazi Mahmud Dharampal and underscored the significance of his act of 'apostasy' in the context of colonial Punjab's religious polemics and controversies. I also noted the importance of Maulwi Abdullah Chakralawi's denouncing the authority of Prophet Muhammad (sunnat) and the Hadith altogether and calling upon Muslims to follow only the Quran in the derivation of their religious beliefs and practices. The precedence set by Maulwi Abdullah inspired similar movements, although, at a much smaller scale in other parts of Punjab as well as within England. However, the idea of exclusive reliance on the Quran at the expense of complete neglect of other sources—resulting in such efforts such as interpreting the usual worship of Namaz in the form of Quran—Namaz—impressed upon the minds of other scholars with similar inclinations the untenable nature of such extreme views. The later movements and their ideologues, therefore, started to look for a middle ground between the authority of the Quranic and non-Quranic sources and plugging the information gap ensuing from reliance on one source exclusively. In this chapter, a very preliminary attempt to make such a move has been made. In the next two chapters, a detailed study of alternative Ahl al-Quran models has been presented. I try also to indicate how the later Ahl al-Quran attempted to strike a balance between the need for upholding the supremacy of the Quran while accommodating the role of the Prophet—but not that of the whole *sunnat* paradigm—in order to impress upon Muslims the validity of their religious doctrines.

#### NOTES

1. E. J. H. Jones has described the concept as providing a new conceptualization of religion as a community: an aggregate of individuals defined by a formal definition and given charge or trust based on qualities of trust. Religions require a community to give it a life and all religions work with other religious communities. Kenneth W. Jones, *Religious Communities in Colonial India*, in S. G. Barrow (ed.), *Essays in British India: New Perspectives* (New Delhi, 1981), 84.



- [illegible]



- 30 The description of Islam in *Tab-i-Barn* has the nature of historical or geographical study  
 31 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 32 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 33 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 34 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
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 37 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 38 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 39 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 40 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 41 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.  
 42 Spencer Lavan, 1997, cited by Spencer Lavan, *The Muslim World in the Middle East*, London: Routledge, 1997.





[illegible]

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- and Deobandi takeover of it is not known. Interview with Qari Ahmad-ud-Din March 2006, Lahore.
- 60 Maubai Abdullah met him in Dera Ismail Khan in 1904. *Progressive* 1904, §248d.
- 61 As has the Urdu text of the *Shah Waliullah* in the *Kitab-i-Nawab*. Although this question arises in relation to the reported fact of the emergence of the *Deoband*. The readers of the journal and Maubai Abdullah's followers were made aware of this as the person in question is the impression of the *Shah Waliullah* had been made by him about the matter. (The Urdu text of the *Shah Waliullah* in the *Kitab-i-Nawab* of Qari Ahmad-ud-Din 1 November 1907): 66-67.
- 62 A. Haj Majlana Fazlul Karim, trans., *Makhsat al-Mawabit* (Lahore, n.d.), I, 144.
- 63 *Shah Waliullah* (Karachi) 32, 10 (March 1952): 152.
- 64 Cf. *Umm al-Qur'an* 5, 4 (December 1907): 7.
- 65 Chakrawali, *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, I-II, 2-4.
- 66 For example Q 10:37 and 16:89.
- 67 'With this... and with... and with... we create laws that the *Kutub* make, that thou mayst explain to mankind that which hath been revealed for them, and that haply they may reflect.
- 68 *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, I-II, 210-1.
- 69 Q 4, 13: Allah revealeth unto thee the Scripture and wisdom, and teacheth thee that which thou knowest not.
- 70 *Tarjuman al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 71 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
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- 77 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 78 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 79 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 80 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 81 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 82 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 83 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
- 84 *Umm al-Qur'an*, I-II, 211. Maubai Abdullah refers to the *Kitab-i-Nawab* in regard to this. This is part of the work in which the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been published. And we must not say that the *Kitab-i-Nawab* has been removed, abandoned.
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- 84 For + + reason, Prophet Muhammad was described by Ali ibn Abi Talib as restricted to having only four wives like all other Muslims. He deviated even further from the general known account of Prophet Muhammad's wives. He suggested he never had more than one wife at a time. The term wives in the relevant verses was interpreted by him as referring to the wives of the prophets in general and not specifically those of Prophet Muhammad's (verse) *Tarjumat-ul-Quran*, XX, 39-42
- 85 *Qasas al-Ashraf*, 27-8
- 86 *Tarjumat-ul-Quran*, I-II, 43-9.
- 87 Chikraoui, *Islam in the West*, 118. Also see 'Inside Arabia' (Lahore, 1991), 15 and 60. Ali ibn Abi Talib believed that they were not women in places like Jerusalem. They remained a number of thousands in the desert and other places like the Antarctic region - which might possibly be the hiding place of Jesus.
- 88 Occasionally in his writings Ali ibn Abi Talib made reference to some sinners of Ahlul-bayt such as those expiating Prophet on account of his wives while he himself were in a ritual state of impurity or about his marriage with undue haste. Ali was the foremost saint of Ahlul-bayt whom - initially - he turned to for advice in the reputation of a superior. In one occasion he turned to him. Ibn Abi Talib of the collection of Ali's letters in the form of his collection of letters was turned to. Maubai Abdullah in the writing of detailed genealogies under the auspices from the Heavens given them for which he implies a divine assistance and ability of knowledge in various information about a particular region. *Journal of the Quran*, 9 November 1907: 3-4.
- 89 *Tarjumat-ul-Quran*, I-II, 220
- 90 Such an approach was independently adopted by such scholars as Lammann. In all four instances - as noted by the Western academy John Burton has reformulated a version of the history of Quran. John Burton, *The Collection of Quran* (Cambridge, 1977).
- 91 *Ibid.*, 13-6
- 92 *Ibid.*, 25-8.
- 93 Chikraoui, *Islam in the West*, 118. Also see *Inside Arabia* (Lahore, 1991), 15 and 60.
- 94 Q 12:111; Q 16:89; Q 7:44-5
- 95 Q 6:50; Q 70:15
- 96 *Statement of the Quran*, I-II, 130. Also see Maubai Abdullah reformulated a version of the history of Quran. In all four instances - as noted by the Western academy John Burton has reformulated a version of the history of Quran. John Burton, *The Collection of Quran* (Cambridge, 1977).
- 97 That is, a significant regarding the details of the matter in the collection of the Quran. It was a matter in a sense a complete of Quran was as stated by Maubai Abdullah in a 1970s. The Quranic text when it was as stated had crept into the original form of the text were corrected gradually. It took some time before the Quran could be restored in the form in which it had always been observed by the prophets and followers of all nations before. Prophet Muhammad's Quran was as stated in the *Qasas al-Ashraf* (Lahore, n.d., repr. 1925), 258-9.
- 98 Maubai Abdullah's expertise in Arabic grammar and his ability to reformulate a version of the Quran was as stated by Maubai Abdullah in a 1970s. Maubai Abdullah, *Statement of the Quran* (Lahore, 1975), 4.
- 99 Also expressed a similar opinion. *Tarjumat-ul-Quran* (Lahore, June 1975), 4.

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118. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 111. But if the Muslims were to follow up such a theme and many other matters were later adopted by Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Arif (d. 1220) in his writings on Namaz and other Muslim practices.

119. 'Establish worship in the going down of the sun until the dark of night, and the recitation of the Qur'an at dawn. Lo! the recital of the Qur'an at dawn is ever well-received.'

120. The purpose of the prayer was the worship of the Allah of power and glory, not of the Allah of love and mercy. In the latter case, the prayer was a means of communion with the divine. The purpose of the prayer was the worship of the Allah of power and glory, not of the Allah of love and mercy. In the latter case, the prayer was a means of communion with the divine.

121. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 223-224. The compilation of facing the Ka'ba served as the sole reason in Muslim thought for the direction of prayer. The purpose of the prayer was the worship of the Allah of power and glory, not of the Allah of love and mercy. In the latter case, the prayer was a means of communion with the divine. The purpose of the prayer was the worship of the Allah of power and glory, not of the Allah of love and mercy. In the latter case, the prayer was a means of communion with the divine.

122. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 199-200. For details, cf. Chapter 5.

123. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 199.

124. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 199.

125. It says: 'Recite, then, of the Qur'an that which is easy for you. He knoweth that there are sick folk among you, while others travel in the land in search of Allah's bounty, and others still are fighting for the cause of Allah. So recite of it that which is easy for you. He knoweth that there are sick folk among you, while others travel in the land in search of Allah's bounty, and others still are fighting for the cause of Allah. So recite of it that which is easy for you.'

126. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 196-8.

127. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 224. He knows it to the mentioning of swine flesh in Quran without any supporting description of it.

128. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 224. He knows it to the mentioning of swine flesh in Quran without any supporting description of it.

129. *Barḥan al-Farqan*, 224. He knows it to the mentioning of swine flesh in Quran without any supporting description of it.

- [illegible]





## Islamic Universalism: The 'Amritsari' Version of Ahl al-Qur'an, 1924-1952

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses Ummat Musalima, an Ahl al-Qur'an group established in Amritsar by Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Amritsari, and evaluates its character as an intellectual endeavour for the purpose of projecting Islam as a universal religion. It would be slow to show that such an idea, propounded by Ahmad-ud-Din, was premised on de-linking Islam from its Arabian connection as well as from any authority of the past that might constrain Muslims supposedly unvarying validity. Another theme of interest in this chapter would be to highlight how Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din and his followers tried to dissociate themselves with other groups and scholars holding similar ideas about Quran, Hadith and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In this regard, the writings of Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din and other scholars such as Aslam Javrajpur, Jamanna Imadi and Jaffar Shah Dharwarvi are extensively quoted to show how they disanced themselves from the Quranic exclusiveness of Maulana Abdullah while at the same time, attempted to seek sacred legitimacy for the current mode of ritual practices among the Muslims without yielding completely to the authority of the Isnad paradigm. The chapter also shows how the Ahl al-Qur'an ideas came to the forefront of religious polemics during the 1930s and registering a considerable impact on the minds of Muslim graduates. The impact of these ideas is further gauged by taking note of the modifications by some important Ulama with regard to their stance on Hadith.



## 5.2. THE CITY OF AMRITSAR: RELIGIOUS POETRIES AND INTELLECTUAL TRADITIONS

The city of Amritsar lost the association of the *darbar* by the British in 1842, continued to enjoy its status as one of the main academic and economic centres which it had come to acquire during Sikh rule. Its importance as a thriving manufacturing centre was because of its silk and pashmina shawl industries, increased mostly by Muslim migrants from Kashmir, whose numbers continued to swell in the following centuries. These Muslims played a vital role in Amritsar, its educational institutions which was marked by vibrant religious co-existence, free extensive interaction. Like other parts of Punjab, Amritsar too was vulnerable to religious enmities which were being waged and prejudices belated among the *hukamats* (Muslims, Arya Samaj and Sikhs). It had given rise to social segregation, religious responses and a lowering of different religious in Punjab in the wake of warring *hukamats* of conversion and religious hatred and accounts their religious persecution, destruction and fuelling religious doctrine. This was imperative in order to equip the believers with necessary prerequisites to the enhancement of status of the community as well as enable them to stand by with conviction in the dogmas of their faith. This trend was firmly marked in Amritsar where setting up of *darbars* to cater to the religious and educational needs which religious and organisational order in spite of the dynamics of changing socio-political relations and economic imperatives as well as the opportunities offered by colonial administrative policies which pursued the upward communities in proportion to their numbers, religious needs and educational needs of individuals. The acquisition of education was stressed in this respect, that a curriculum within the new colonial administrative set up and scheme of studies. It was accompanied with an intense call of preserving culture and calls for religious consolidation, dignities, rites or adhering more strictly to them because of the need to cope with changes initiated by western education and other experiments.

With similar concerns in mind, members of the Muslim community initiated a series of religious magistracies in private madaris, established the *Madrassa Islamiyya* Amritsar in 1905 which was renamed *Al-Farooq* in 1922. Amritsar in 1905, Urdu was taught, a number of schools were set up for Muslim students. As the number of students increased, it was decided to work towards establishing a college. This project finally materialised in 1933. *Madrassa Islamiyya* Amritsar and *Al-Farooq* were M.D.

Tahir and Akhwan Husayn Raipuri were among the faculty of the Islamic College, Amritsar, in matters of religious education. The American impressed upon the Muslims to give up extravagant customs and bad habits that were of the pre-Islamic kind.<sup>1</sup> In their efforts in education, Imam, the American even advanced for a president who could aid fellow Muslims in developing a better understanding of Islam and connect Christian missionaries and other non-Muslims outside the region.<sup>2</sup> Several other organizations with similar objectives of promoting education among the Muslims began a gradual acquisition of modern education and teaching religious spirit among them were also set up in Amritsar during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>3</sup>

Equally important was the fast growing network of religious seminaries as the Ulama increasingly came to the forefront as guides for Muslims in matters of faith and practice. Deoband, or Dehli, as the city appeared to be comparatively named, Madrasah Faramayya run by Muhammad Hameed Hasan Ansari was the famous centre of Deobandi education. Amritsar was not far away. However, numerous individuals and centres who had been trained in Deobandi institutions or were inclined towards sharing its ideas regarding practices in worship, customs, behaviour and so on, of themselves as Hanafis so as to promote inter-religious harmony among Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. A Murshid journal, al-Idhar from Amritsar, which remained a point of discussion was extremely important in making the Deobandi presence felt in the city and the participation in contemporary debates and controversies. At Muhammad Ali Aslam Ansari was in the city and in 1904 the Baridkhana Arabi (its ranks included some members whose intellectual guidance was sought and admired even by its rival groups). But all the Muslim religious groups, Ahl-i-Hadith seemed to have been reminding, as compared to the others in Amritsar, in particular, and East Punjab in whole. Ahl-i-Hadith scholars and their prodigious progeny had been established and staff an important Ahl-i-Hadith seminary named Taj-ul-Uloom which in turn provided education for young Muslims future scholars, adepts and prayer leaders. Ahl-i-Hadith presence in the city was strengthened by figures like Abdullah who belonged nobility and patronized the Ahl-i-Hadith by sponsoring the building of Umm al-Qura mosque. The site of Amritsar's city was importantly for Sa'ad al-Din (1871-1947) was actively engaged in publishing of a weekly journal Taj-ul-Uloom and held numerous conferences and meetings in the city. Madrasahs in Amritsar were Abulhasan and Arif Samiyya as well as the newly established Umm al-Qura Ahmad-ul-Uloom were under the banner of Ummat-i-Muslma.

### § 3. KHWAJA AHMAD-UD-DIN AMRITSARI (1861-1936):

#### BACKGROUND TO HIS LIFE AND WORKS

Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Amritsari can be credited with popularising and giving new dimensions to the new trend of thoughts regarding Hadith introduced by Maulana Andaulah Chakralawi in Lahore. For Khawaja Abdullah rejection of Hadith implied supremacy of the Quran as the only sacred text and possibility of deriving from it all the required information for religious beliefs and practices. Ahmad-ud-Din used the same argument for a more differentiated interpretation of Islam which could hold appeal as a rational, tolerant and universal religion for the followers of all creeds. Hence for him Islam had to be interpreted so much to assert the supremacy of the Quran *per se* but not to oblige anyone to accept the need to accord the status of Divinity to the Quran alone. The 'simple' Quran, stripped of the burden of classical and medieval theological philosophical offerings, Aristotelianism and connectivity with the juristic findings of the past could then be offered as the most amicable option to resolve inter religious differences and bring about harmony among the followers of different faiths. Apart from his unique view on Hadith, this very version of Islamic Universalism is a novel—if not wholly pioneering—effort on part of Ahmad-ud-Din in the annals of modern South Asian Islam.

Ahmad-ud-Din came to acquire a rather free thinking vein—due to the influence exercised on him by Ishak-ul-Mil Qasri (d. 1887)—an Ahl-i-Sunnat scholar who had moved to Amritsar in the latter half of the nineteenth century to teach at a local madrasah.<sup>1</sup> During his formative years, when Ahmad-ud-Din was studying at a local Mission school where he had studied the Bible and was inclined to a more critical reading of the Quran, he came into regular contacts with Ghalib-ud-Din who by that time had begun to display a difference with the ulama on a number of issues in his writings published as treatise or newspaper essays. One such writing which later became relevant to the ideas espoused by Ahmad-ud-Din was published in 1888 in connection with the incident of Ben and Amman. The point that only those of the Prophets' descendants were binding which had a divine origin and not the ones which he was required to consult his companions for their existence alone for consultation when it pertained to religious—his was approved of by the Prophet—own a study though he rendered a nod by stating which he as reported to have remained silent in response to—must drop—were



Isma'il High School can be under-standed and could only be secured because he was a friend of Sayyid-Din Kichlu—the famous Congress leader from Amritsar and one of the people responsible for administering Anjuman-e-Islamiyya—were favourably disposed towards him and his ideas.<sup>16</sup> In the case of his special focus was on the rights of an orphaned grandson to inherit a share from the property of his grandfather. In his opinion, death of the father does not terminate the connection between the grandson and the grandfather as he is an actual witness of his grandfather's succession. Denial of share of grandchildren in their grandfathers' property argued Ahmad-ud-Din leaves them at the mercy of their maternal relations for sustenance or gestures of goodwill on the part of paternal uncles. This not only goes against the grain of natural laws of inheritance and distribution of shares, but also makes a mockery of the Qur'anic statement of grandchild being one of Allah's blessings. One of the chief critics of Ahmad-ud-Din was *Abdurrahman Qasim* was Mirza Aslam Qasim who responded by drawing an analogy between an orphaned grandchild and a passenger with a third class ticket dependent upon the discretionary power of the ticket-checker for upgrading of his ticket class. In response, Ahmad-ud-Din affirmed the fact that the Qasim admitted ticket-checker, a true grandfather, discretionary power to reward or punish, but not take into consideration the seat allotted in the third class compartment for the minimum allotted share to a passenger—the orphaned grandson—on account of the ticket he already possesses.<sup>17</sup> Such an attitude towards orphans and their disregard for their rights could no longer be allowed to continue especially at a time when the world war had erupted and thousands of young men were being led to the battlefields, hence were in danger of losing their lives.<sup>18</sup>

#### 5.4. DISPUTING THE STATUS OF HADITH

By the early 1920s Ahmad-ud-Din had gone public with his views about hadith which he previously had been sharing mainly with the study circle of his friends or debating with a lama in person. The occasion for a going public came in 1925 in the form of his exchange of letters with Sana'ullah Amritsari on the topic—'Revelation'. Ahmad-ud-Din insisted the discussion by distinguishing between two sources of guidance—Divine and Rational. While the Divine source was defined by him as the most definite source of guidance whereby the Will of God is made clear in unambiguous and clear terms, rational sources were regarded as having interpretations of their own—even when their source was from the Prophet.

He pointed out that his difference between the two had been acknowledged by the Quran itself. According to a direction was given to the Prophet to make consultations while making decisions about those affairs that fell outside the realm of revelation.<sup>1</sup> Samiullah, in his response (1961), made the scope of the Prophet's authority by drawing a comparison between the Prophet and a High Court judge. He stated:

Law making is the task of a legislature. It is not the duty of the High Court to make laws but to see and pronounce if law is made according to them it becomes as binding as law for the whole or province. And if a judge of a High Court makes his opinion about to issue then it becomes binding for the whole of country even though the ruling itself is not an law but only an interpretation and judgment in accordance with the law. The saying of the Prophet of God has similar relation with Quran.<sup>2</sup>

This he proceeded to reiterate on repeated description of Prophet Muhammad (peace) by the Ahl-i-Hadith as a mortal human being albeit divinely guided in matters of religious guidance and interpretation of the Quran to make it incumbent for the believers to obey him. This served to set him apart from ordinary mortals and commentators of the Quran. Ahmad ul Din on the other hand, considered the Prophet to be in the same league as other exegetes and jurists and found it impossible for an individual with all his strengths and shortcomings as a human to have a complete knowledge of the scripture which was meant to be revealed to all times and for all humanity. By proclaiming this he did not profess to be hurting the status of the Prophet but claimed to be correcting that of Revelation to its rightful place. Such divergence of views did not allow the discussion to reach a conclusive end and was discontinued after an exchange of a few letters. However, this episode did serve to highlight Ahmad ul Din's academic credentials for he courageously put forth his apparently defensible new ideas on Hadith and the Prophet in the face of opposition from the most well known and fiery Ahl-i-Hadith scholar and polemicist as debated with several honorific titles in recognition for his services in defence of Islamic dogmas against the onslaught of various opponents.

Shortly afterwards in 1924, a group of the educated Muslims from Amritsar—mostly college educated or professionals with an interest in Islamic studies without affiliations to a particular Muslim group—was madam inspired by Ahmad ul Din's revisionist critique of Hadith, rallied together to start a monthly journal by the name of *Surat* under the editorship of Hakim Shahab ul Din Amritsar and assistance of

Muhammad Husayn Arshad (1985).<sup>2</sup> It aimed to prove that the Quran alone was the DIVINE SCRIPTURE and hence sufficed as a source of guidance. The contents and teachings of the Quran were to be widely disseminated by the newly established journal. More importantly, *Balagh* was set to serve the purpose of promoting the writings of Ahmad ud Din – especially his vision of Islamic universalism as enshrined in the charter of Ummat-i-Muslime, a organization whose foundation coincided with that of the journal.<sup>3</sup> The newly founded organization made a conscious effort to dissociate itself from the Ahl al-Quran Lahore.<sup>4</sup> In a later writing published in *Balagh*, Muhammad Husayn Arshad so highlighted the differences between the two. He accused the Ahl al-Quran Lahore of taking their Imams as infallible, imitating them blindly, and in regarding their sect alone as the true representative of Islam, and their form of Namaz (prayer) as being the only one that was truly Islamic. In opposition to that, Ummat-i-Muslime professed to accord respect and consideration to Hadith and works of learned/pious scholars and believing in unity between the sects of all monotheistic religions regardless of their forms of worship and other practices.<sup>5</sup> Such was the community of believers envisaged by Khwaja Ahmad ud Din Amritsari under the banner of Ummat-i-Muslime.

### 5.5. AHMAD UD-DIN'S ISLAMIC UNIVERSALISM

In its traditional usage, Ummat-i-Muslime denotes the world community of Muslims. But the term was given a different connotation by Ahmad ud-Din. He broadened its scope to include within its contours true believers of all the faiths. The crux of his idea of Islamic universalism called for all believers to be in agreement, basing themselves on the basis of what was common in their respective religions. This is best explained in his own words as stated in the preamble to his exegetical essays:

When followers of different religions assemble to present the qualities of their respective religions, they all say: "Our religion teaches love and greatness of God, calls for His worship, harmonizes the obedient with his real Lord and makes him the adherent resigned to the Will of his Master. It teaches justice and fair play with the creations of God, suggests a path of truth, rationality, harmony and tranquillity and establishes freedom and equality. It gives rights to women and orphans, improves their conditions and strengthens mutual relations, obliging to stand by agreed terms. It supports world unity and peace. It forbids vulgarity and rationality, and rigorous oppression and revolt. It prevents from poverty and its pernicious prejudices and bad

unwilling to let their chapter for followers of a different faith to accept the faith as a good thing at all and not to allow their version of a faith to be actions and statements? To make such a demand from the believers does not amount to curtailing the freedom of the believers to maintain established faith in real and actual [spirit]. On dissenting subject, every person has the right to a practice if he may be made it appropriate with his religious values as a better reward in the Hereafter in fear of Allah. But the general believers to change their minds if it become the duty for them; possibility of a common Quran is still of such statements [favouring one side of faith] resolves different views and disputes between the two religious leaders them to co-exist with peace and unity and calls for mutual cooperation.<sup>36</sup>

Having stated that there is only one correct belief of promoting a belief in the unity of God and regard for the whole of humankind as creation of a single Supreme Being Ahmad ul Din asserted that there common or agreed principles vital for peaceful mutual coexistence of a group of different faith were new and needed to be made Quran. The Quran alone could serve as an arbiter of truth acceptable for all and as a standard for settling the disputes among them. It was in this view of the world that was a vision of Ahmad ul Din's view of the Quran which then ensued Ahmad ul Din's glorious struggle. Ahmad ul Din's view of world he regarded Islam as a religion that had reduced Islam from a world religion with distinct local traits and a certain meaning of Islam in Mecca as a religion for the masses all other prophets in according to which was a practice. These two concepts along with a necessary criteria for the human interpretation of the Quran had to be simultaneously addressed because of their maximum proximity to each other. It was because, in Ahmad ul Din's view of world religions an existence of prophetic ages had in the first place led to wars within the believers and an undue regard for religious practices that were a cause subject to variations on the basis of regional, ethnic and cultural differences. He identified the problem with the followers of a religion who, out of their immense reverence for his founding faith, admitted their scope to in a state of par with God and pressed for his words and actions to be followed with minute details. Since every religion had its own peculiar figurehead, a director in the ranks of world powers of the time, it was inevitable. He argued that it was for this reason that the Quran called for belief in the true religion as a love, justice and dignity allow for the experience of one over the other. Hence the overall conception of his notion of faith for Ahmad ul Din was to testify that there is no god but Allah without there being any need



for an adoption in this expression. Ahmad ud-Din further refined his ideal Muslim attitude regarding *shari'ah* and the Prophet was thus not entirely severed, as it was being torn from contemporary commentaries and its literature, but was also severed from an important doctrinal element in Arab *fiqh*. The interpretation of Islam to be replaced with one time and place to more universal values.

As he began to do this, Ahmad ud-Din further refined his ideas and presented them in a more coherent theoretical framework as he again engaged himself in a written seminar with Sayyid Ash-Subkhani in 1899. This seminar did not have the scope of the Hadith literature to minimize its contents. The focus of the debate was whether or not the place the Prophet had occupied in the community was due to religious practices binding for his followers. Ahmad ud-Din stated the answer was an "ongoing" idea of *ummat* that was not a binding *As-Sunnah* in itself. *Ummah* did not mean an "ethnically" or "culturally" exclusive group of the Prophet's followers where obedience to the *Shari'ah* was mandatory. All Muslims are expected to follow the *Shari'ah* and it was the prophets that commanded authority but the *ummat* was binding. *Ummah* was not *ummat* created with God alone. The interpretation of the term *shari'ah* in a Na'izian and downgraded the actual commanding authority in the sense of not requiring any external support or sanction. *Shari'ah* was truly an actual commanding authority. *Ummah* was not *ummat* but *ghayr* just as the *ummat* was commanding as to its duties. It could be dependent on any reason or a guarantee in the same way the *ummat* was authority as a derivative from that of *shari'ah* and it is need for a *shari'ah* support. Ahmad ud-Din rejected it by saying that the *ummat* was not due to the teachings of the Prophet. It comprised a separate *ummat* as *ummat* rather they were just a legal administrative decision which had to be accepted as commanded by *ummat*. Hence the actual *ummat* *ummat* was not *ummat* with *ummat*. This prevented Na'izism with a reason to argue that in case *ummat* was to be observed as a ruler similar to the *ummat* could be legal administrative affairs. But the *ummat* could not be a ruler for obeying him as a prophet is matter of *ummat* to obey the *ummat*. If Ahmad ud-Din's opinion, doing that would bring the Prophet the least *ummat* all this not broaden the sphere of activities. A *ummat* is *ummat* would be binding to follow *ummat* as *ummat* examples. The method of Na'iz was to be learned from the Prophet. In even he was to show a way was not to follow the Prophet because even that was mentioned in the Quran and determined by the Prophet practically.

during his lifetime.<sup>40</sup> About revelations—both *maida* and *ghayr maida*—being derived from the same source, Ahmad-ud-Din said that there were instances in the Prophet's life when revelations stopped and his opponents mocked him. The Prophet was commanded by the Quran to declare that he does not say anything on his own account which clearly indicated that Revelation only applied to the Divine Scriptures and not to the Prophet's own words. For this reason neither the words of the Prophet could be termed as being God's words, nor is the Quran described as *Hadieth*.<sup>41</sup> Also, since legal-administrative obedience of the Prophet, as commanded by God, was conditioned by the circumstances in which Muslims had set up their own state and were expanding militarily—especially after the conquest of Mecca—it could not be used as an argument for legitimizing unconditional surrender to the Prophet's decisions and acts regarding religion.

## 5.6. HUMANIZING THE PROPHETS

Any attempt at mitigating the authority of the Prophet had also to correspond to the need of emphasizing the Fallibility of his actions and a more human understanding of the scripture at the expense of a more sacred image of the Prophet as a recipient of Divine endowments and favours, procured in *Hadieth* and even—in some extent—by the Quran. The most important question in this respect was whether the Quran could have been revealed to someone else or was the Prophet especially chosen and uniquely fitted for this task by special faculties created in him by Divine grace. If the latter version was to be accepted, it made sense to accord to all his words and acts a similar revelatory aura. In order to refute such an argument, Ahmad-ud-Din firmly reiterated his belief in the ordinariness of the Prophet and stated that he was devoid of any special and divine personal character and described the revelation of the Quran to his heart as God's favour to him even though the Prophet himself did not expect to be its recipient.<sup>42</sup> If prophets were to be accorded special status for their roles as recipients of revelations, then similar attitude should be reserved for Angels who served as intermediaries between them and God.<sup>43</sup> Or, alternatively, those verses in the Quran which suggested a special bonding between God and Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) needed to be differently interpreted. For example, the reason God explicitly cautioned the Muslims in the Quran not to raise their voices in the presence of the Prophet was likened by Ahmad-ud-Din to observance of protocols and etiquettes in the presence of a sovereign or

chairperson of council." In a similar vein, it explained *Surah al-Falak* as referring to any angry opponent turning red with wrath and fury bent upon wiping out the religion of Islam which is wealth and influence." As for the descriptions of the apparently supernatural events ascribed to different prophets in the Quran, Ahmad-ud-Din offered interpretations similar to those held out by Sayyid Ahmad Khan based on the theory of Naturalism. He shared Sayyid Ahmad Khan's idea of God as revealed in cosmos and man, and reflected in the laws of Nature, i.e. the 'Work of God'. In his enumeration of these ideas, Ahmad-ud-Din stated:

The authority of God's supernaturalism in Nature, the True Sage has arranged in series of causes and effects. All these causes are subjugated and obedient to Him. Allah assigns tasks specific to a cause and it does not have a choice and act as a servant to perform a task. If one starts as an 'asking', asks on His own without involving, he specifies causes, then that was its mission. If he works upon His working as a servant and subjecting to and becoming a co-worker of the Book of Nature and secondly the very purpose of these causes would be rendered useless and we would not be required to make use of them. If we want to go to Lahore, use a walk-lift room and pray you take the 'walk-lift' as a son's vehicle, he Spirit of God can cast His shadow upon you. This is to insult God and consider His cause and effect chains as useless and irrational."

The system of causes and effects thus established rules out the possibility for any supernatural event taking place. Hence:

There is no room left in the world to raise or supernatural anywhere in the Quran. If a community believes Allah does not say that it is not for the True Faith of Allah (*Laumna Allah*) to be denied then... So, Allah has created everything in order and definite mould. There does not remain any room for change or deviation in anything. Whatever the World would want, can be accomplished within the scope of the best and definite world's order, as set by Him. So when a thing is willed by the Lord of Worlds can be accomplished as it is planned, then there does not remain any need for Him to make changes in the best and definite mould and rules established by Him.

The works of earlier prophets and messengers are presented as challenged by the supernatural, but the people of that age are not shown to have been affected in the way one could call the natural reaction to witnessing a supernatural event. The signs shown by Moses were supernatural, then why did Pharaoh and his men so laugh at them? Why did the people of Israel have to secretly escape from Egypt? How could Pharaoh dare to tempt to go after them to catch them? For the people of Israel themselves, these signs did not have the impact that Samiri's golden calf had on them. They were near on the verge of killing Aaron. And then as

soon as they reached at the other side of the river, they said: O Moses create for us a god as the people here have.<sup>41</sup>

Ahmad-ud-Din found many factors at play in the creation of *Ma'ad* by the Quran in the case of Moses, as he smote his iron rod against a rock about which he had an intention: he it would probably be a source base of a stream was perceived. *Ma'ad* was also the magical display of power to Moses and could magicians of Pharaoh. Ahmad-ud-Din stretched the meanings of relevant verses too far in search of a natural explanation and in effect it is a causal link. Accordingly, Moses' rod did not become a support, it remained a rod but with its movement, it appeared to be moving and creating a state. The cause for the movement in rod was sought in natural laws. In the days of Moses, Mount Sinai was an active volcano. This volcano was often testified to by frequent earthquakes as reported in the Quran. When Moses became a conscious witness even though with vision, Mount Sinai it was because of one of the earthquakes. These volcanic eruptions gave rise to electric currents in the nearby valleys. A tree in a valley with great leaves and it is considered to be more receptive to electricity, used to glow with its current. With Moses walking on the valley with his feet, he became more a witness to the current and it became possible for him to use this current in making the rod move when required.

Of more relevance to his Muslim readership were Ahmad-ud-Din's views on *Ma'ad* as a sign of a signpost in the life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to which a passing reference had been made in the Quran. The first instance of these incidents is that of *Ma'ad* on ascending the Heavens (Surah al-Baqara 117) of the Quran, there is mention of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) being shown signs of a road in a nocturnal journey. Ahmad-ud-Din's exegetical comments on the supernatural elements of his position by confirming the occurrence of the said event within the bounds of Meccan area adjoining Mecca. This meaning was arrived at by interpreting the term *Ma'ad* as the cause as well as the effect of a particular movement in Jerusalem but to any mosque at the outskirts of a town. This was a place where there could not have been a mosque with the name of *Ma'ad*. The area in which Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was shown around was therefore located in the outskirts of Mecca at a place of the blessed view of the sacred mosque of Mecca and A star of Islam was to show the Prophet signs of a road and attract him to revelation. Had *Ma'ad* or other supernatural events associated with Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) like spreading up of Mount al-Sinai in *Qasas* 19

misinterpreted as implying that it could not have been possible for the Meccans to continue opposing him.<sup>50</sup> If Meccans had acquiesced in the role of Prophet + Muhammad as an exceptional person, possessing the unique & miracle-working powers that were the basis of the cherished idea of need for revelation or use of special faculties. He was not a mad individual's concept of personhood; it was deemed imperative that a prophet *must* be an ordinary human being so as to have the ability to perform the unique & miracle-working and convincing role of the revelation. Muhammad was supposed to be a person who received revelation in reading the path of God to the point of revelation without getting deterred or astray in spite of all the difficulties and weakness suggested even prior models of prophets. He was not a person similar to human beings. A prophet as a human being, on the other hand, could not have inspired others to emulate his character or to place him as a conceptual center of prophetic function or even his work. A mad person's interpretation of the Quran in which prophets were shown as making mistakes, as sinners and criminals was not a revelation; it was a madman's idea made by God to His prophets for acts of disobedience.

[illegible]

arrive at an understanding of the sacred texts revealed to them. As for matters pertaining to administration and governance, they were specifically instructed by God to make decisions in consultation with others and even these were valid only if they were revoked by a later consensus.<sup>11</sup> Abū Ḥadūd-Dīn further added that not only were Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) legal, administrative decisions and interpretations of the Quran unreliable and possibly erroneous they had been previously recorded in the form of Hadith books to offer credible references to his actual practices.

But since Ahmad ad Din had repeatedly referred to the Quran alone as the source of guidance<sup>12</sup> and reiterated<sup>13</sup> the theological impossibility of the Prophet exercising a commanding or binding stature, it was of lesser significance for him to probe the historicity of Hadith. More important to him was the so-called revelatory status of Hadith as *uḥl ghayr matlu*. In discussing that, the question of historicity of Hadith literature did figure but only as means of highlighting its inferiority in comparison to the Quran. This is effectively summarized in his comparison between the two:

God never ever promised to preserve the Ahadith nor are they have practically been. He only promised to preserve the Quran. The Ahadith are known to be weak and corrupt. They have not been written down by the Prophet or Ashab or the Companions. But for Quran God himself has promised to preserve it and its copies written by the Companions are actually found in the present world.<sup>14</sup>

But Ahmad ad Din did contest certain historical narratives to be found in Hadith literature which he found to be unimpeachable upon Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) character. The contents of such traditions in Ahmad ad Din's opinion served as malicious propaganda to the benefit of Islam's opponents insofar as these Ahadith effectively leveled allegations of moral and religious lapses serious enough to invalidate Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) claims of prophet hood and a recipient of God's final and most perfect revelation.<sup>15</sup> Like Sayyid Ahmad Khan, he stressed more importance to disputing the reports about Muhammad's (peace be upon him) personal life as elucidated in certain Ahadith. While, for most other incidents in the Prophet's life Ahmad ad Din could simply doubt the possibility of their occurrence in the first place, the same could not be done with regard to reports of tensions within Muhammad's (peace be upon him) household as Qudus-ud-Din had explicitly dealt with these. In these cases, he gathered historical information provided by the Quran and fitted it into his desirable project on the Prophet's image as bearer of middle-class

moral values. The real story which then appeared absolved the Prophet of sexual indulgence with his newly wedded wife as the cause for conflict with the rest of his wives.<sup>59</sup> According to Ahmad-ud-Din's version of the incident, the dispute started when the Prophet came to know that some objectionable ritual he custom had been observed in his household in his absence. The Prophet warned his wife that this could be a cause for divorce and instructed her to convey this message to his other wives in an appropriate manner. But she conveyed his message to the other wives in a manner which irritated them. When the Prophet reprimanded her over this, the wife reacted and shot back that all his wives had been living in poverty for his sake and they are still being threatened by divorce over a petty issue. The Prophet with a compassionate heart gave in to the pleas of his wives and swore never to divorce them. But he was reprimanded by God who instructed him to revoke his oath since it contradicted with the laws of divorce specified by God that makes divorce an option when the circumstances so demand.<sup>60</sup>

### 5.7. HOW TO OFFER NAMAZ?

With religious instructions from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) not worthy of being taken into binding consideration, nor available in an historical or credible form, Ahmad-ud-Din—like his predecessor Maulwā Abdulah Chakrawala with similar approach to the Prophet and Hadith—offered the Quran as a repository of Divine knowledge required to steer the believers in all their dealings. The foremost question of concern to be addressed in the face of the existing information vacuum about religious practices was the ritual procedure of offering Namaz. Maulwā Abdulah had done so by twisting the meanings of Quranic verses to give shape to a new form of Namaz for which he was criticised even by Ahmad-ud-Din. By holding the view that definition of external forms of Namaz and its ritual details were uncalled for, he absolved himself from the responsibility of providing variety to existing forms of prayer or concocting one of his own without the aid of Hadith and Sunna. This gave him the leverage to argue for Islam's capability to serve as a universal religion with flexibility in observance of religious rituals and adaptability in forms of worship so as to ensure compatibility with regional norms and cultural practices of people in different and distant parts of the world. Thus he claimed to infer from the Quran what does not specify the procedure for offering Namaz. A conspicuous absence of details regarding Namaz was taken by Ahmad-ud-Din as indicative of Almighty's prudent

What may be in question open to the good sense of worshippers. Has He been inclined towards this only on a fixed form of Namaz. It could easily have been done in two pages of Quranic text. But since God's Prophets were set to draw interreligious boundaries on the basis of forms of worship, this was the reason why the Quran mentioned monotheists and People of the Book from pre-Islamic days were free to their prayers, but did not comment upon the manner of performance of the charges introduced in it with the advent of Islam. It is clearly proved that prayers offered by Christians, Jews, Ahl al-Quran or any other were the same in essence as those offered by the Muslims, and the external form of these prayers did not make any difference in terms of their rewards to the worshipper.<sup>61</sup> By bowing, this view which did not arise any doubt in Ahmad al-Din is search for a new form of Namaz or to find fault with the one already established among the Muslims. As for the unique prayers and requests state a frankness expected of a worshipper Ahmad al-Din distinguished between two kinds of Namaz. Each of them was in a primary way means of remembering God and thanking the Almighty for His bounties. He described the first kind of Namaz as an ordinary way of remembering God. It did not require any special arrangements to be made in its observance and could be carried out while performing works or doing some or other while conversing with others. The other special form of prayer, however, only was free from avoid distraction by any other act. A clear difference between the two was that the special one was unhesitatingly to be done in the case of the ordinary prayers no such compulsion was put in place. For this type of prayers, he wrote many fixed forms of observations not specifically for recitation.

When it came to details of ritual purity Ahmad al-Din maintained that latrines were not only washed in matters of everyday cleanliness and not only he overruled requests for prayers offered in private. It was only when they were praying in a congregation that it was compulsory for worshippers to maintain strict cleanliness so as not to offend others.<sup>62</sup>

In order to convince all monotheists and true worshippers of the Lord to join the Muslims in their prayers, Ahmad al-Din recommended a few restrictions. No restrictions should be set specifically to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his family or his community. He set generally to the members of all religions and pious men as a gesture of tolerance and sincerity on the part of Muslims. And secondly those who do not know Arabic should be allowed to do prayers in their own



language instead of reciting perhaps incomprehensibly a text they did not understand.<sup>45</sup>

One other important hindrance that remained to be overcome before capitalising non-Muslim monotheists to join Muslim gatherings of worship was the compulsion of offering prayers in the direction of the Holy Ka'ba. Ahmad-ad-Din offered religious and scientific arguments against adopting it as a necessary practice. In his opinion the reason why it commanded the believers to make their direction different from that of Jews, was meant to show the hollowness of Jewish practice of making a particular direction towards which one should face in worship. It was absurd to think that God reprimanded Jews for one act and then sanctioned the same for Muslims by fixing an alternative *qibla* for them. What was meant by the Quranic verse 112:44 was not that worshippers ought to turn their faces towards the Ka'ba but to face the direction where Nazim was offered on the Ka'ba. In his arguments to support this stance Ahmad-ad-Din stated:

The Ka'ba is a mosque. If it is asked and prayer is offered outside its precincts without a valid reason, that would be tantamount to stripping the Ka'ba of its status as a mosque. The very reason for which the Sacred Mosque was built was that prayers should be offered inside it. It was not built for Allah to reside in there but for his saints to offer prayers. . . . Arabian masses have been offering prayers inside it along with the worshippers; this is why it is referred to as *Mayam-tharatan* [the place of residence of Ananias]. Contrary to what the infidels used to say, pray outside the Sacred Mosque. . . . It is so clear that inside the Sacred Mosque, Namaz would be offered in any direction. There cannot be any objection even for the separation and congregation of offering of prayers [inside the Ka'ba]. Consequently, prayers would be offered in any one direction as mutually agreed upon by the Imam or his own.<sup>46</sup>

But it found it acceptable for Muslims to continue offering their prayers in the direction of the Ka'ba so as to preserve uniformity of practices among Muslims and to avoid unnecessary disputes. His insistence of flexibility regarding the Ka'ba Ahmad-ad-Din claimed that he was not weakening the bonds of shari'at. In the *Minhaj* he was attempting to increase the number of Muslim community by opening its doors to all those who offered prayers in shari'ah way and with the same devotion and sincerity.

In scientific terminology Ahmad-ad-Din found it hardly possible for the worshippers to be facing the Ka'ba in complete proximity to it. There

as if they were living in distant corners of the world. Through his geographical knowledge, he made the following observations:

For people living in the off places it is assumed to require a one degree change in the east direction of the Ka'ba. For a place situated in a thousand miles distance from the Ka'ba, a variation of one degree in the direction would necessarily lead to a 17°5' east deviation from the direction of the Ka'ba. Which direction of the Ka'ba should be taken by people living in the east and west of Mecca at 170 degrees? For them, the Ka'ba is located in the east and west at equal distances and similar directions. Then, it is wondered on a one thousand mile, thousand mile, two thousand mile, twelve thousand mile or further and half thousand mile distance from the direction of the Ka'ba from one place any difference than other forms can there possibly be in their compass greater than that of twelve and half thousand miles. In that case it becomes imperative that if the people of a city face towards the Ka'ba in the direction of west, they can likewise face to facing the Ka'ba in the direction of the east. The only difference being that if a one thousand mile distance (from the Ka'ba) is twelve thousand miles from the other side, would be approximately thirteen thousand miles because the circumference of the earth is approximately twenty-five thousand miles. And then which direction should these people face that are in the part of the earth which is nearly opposite to the Ka'ba on the other side of the earth? For them the Ka'ba is in the same direction in all conditions.<sup>26</sup>

In case there was nothing sacred about the Ka'ba as such, there did not remain any need for a re-orientation around it as is the practice among the Muslims for the performance of Hajj. It did not make sense to attend such undue steps to use for a place that has little relevance to pilgrims outside Arabia.<sup>27</sup> Hajj is, then, interpreted by Ahmad al-Din in radically revisionist terms. He described Hajj as an annual national conference of the Arabs which could be convened by Muslims for discussion on different issues. It was meant to be a gathering that brought together the people and did not require people to undergo needless exertions in wearing the *litham* or taking away black stone. This occasion could be used to have important and notable assemblies. Since it was supposed to be a large gathering, the delegates were expected not to become a burden on the local population but to arrange for food so that no shortages occur. It is for this reason that Hajj delegates are required to make sacrificial offerings of animals during the proceedings of Hajj, for slaughtering of animals in his name does not benefit God in any manner.<sup>28</sup> One is required to be virtuous and pious throughout the proceedings. The first day of Hajj conference should be sanctioned for commission discussions

and lectures. The second day should be the day of rest when delegates are transported out of the precincts of the city, circulating and washing their men. On the third day the delegates will reach the Sacred Mosque in Mecca where funds will be collected and a report of the proceedings submitted.

Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Amritsari's interpretation of the Quran belied thirteen centuries of Muslim scholarship on it, its exegesis, Hadith and jurisprudence. But for him this stark contrast with the works and findings of previous scholars was justified because it upheld the supremacy of the Quran and the comprehensiveness and integrity of its text, and promoted inter-religious harmony and tolerance. This was not to show utter contempt on his part for learned scholars of yesteryears but only to point out that influence of non-divine sources had clouded their reasoning. During his lifetime, Ahmad-ud-Din's controversial views had evoked strong reactions from religious quarters, especially by the Ulama of Ahl-e-Hadith who were spearheaded by Sanaullah Amritsar. But Ahmad-ud-Din's critique of traditional Islam could not be easily set aside or summarily dismissed. Even if his works did not inspire large scale following, his ideas did aid in easing the Ulama imposed restrictions on abiding principles of Islam. His views questioned exaggerated reverence for the Prophet and Islamic precedence to his authority, and generated a considerable academic interest leading to a fresh and more inquisitive group of Islamic traditions, type of a different religious outlooks and concerns.

### 5.8. INFLUENCE OF KHWAJA AHMAD-UD-DIN AMRITSARI'S THOUGHT PROCESS

From 1940s onwards, several other scholars began contributing to the ongoing controversies regarding Hadith. Abul Kalam Azad (d. 1958) was one such figure. It is probable that he came in contact with the Ahmad-ud-Din while he was serving as the editor of *Ma'arif* in Amritsar. A resulting influence appears in his own concepts of Islam and Islamic law which are at least parallel to the views held by the majority Ulama. Resultantly, he acknowledged the reformatory value of Hadith regarding socio-ethical norms but refused to acknowledge it as a source of law.<sup>1</sup> His concept of *ma'rifat-e-haqiqat* (Ultimate Reality) was also not very dissimilar to that of Ahmad-ud-Din.

Ahmad-ud-Din's link with Allama Muhammad Iqbal was, however, more direct and was facilitated by Ahmad-ud-Din's disciple Sufi



preceding the Quran is as vain as putting the horse before the cart. By doing this neither of the two would be able to move.<sup>78</sup> His views about the historicity of Hadith literature were mostly a reiteration of Goldziher's thesis about its compilation. Maabir q's somewhat more original contribution to ongoing discourse on Hadith came in a later writing in which he criticized Hadith as detached from its specific context. He opined:

Hadith, because they were sayat utterances of the Prophet separated from the context and the atmosphere of the conversation and did not even sometimes mention the status of the man to whom the conversation of the Prophet was addressed, created a tremendous confusion in the original teaching of the Quran and Islam became even ten times more sectarian in its teaching aspect.<sup>79</sup>

Such a deviation from Divine commandments towards the human agency of the Prophet was attributed by him to material decay of Muslims and sapping of their vigour and action. To rectify this, Maabir q's Quran-centric approach was meant to revitalize Muslim energies and translate them into political action for pursuit of worldly gains. He considered such an achievement a more significant component of faith than the drudgery of spiritless observance of prayer rituals. For this approach he was derided by the Ulama<sup>80</sup> but he remained convinced that people of the West were truly deserving of God's Caliphate on earth and preferred candidates for salvation by the Almighty.<sup>81</sup> On his part, he took the Ulama to task for their obscurantist beliefs, lack of progressive outlook and their teachings as being contrary to the egalitarian spirit of

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. 77

Similar views regarding the content and validity of Hadith literature were being expressed by other Western-educated Muslim scholars. Mumtaz Ali, editor of an Urdu magazine *Tehzeeb-e-Niswan* for women, reemphasized Sayyid Ahmad Khan's suggestions of content analysis of traditions rather than relying on transmission chains for authentication of a Hadith.<sup>82</sup> Nivaz Fatchpur, a noted writer and editor of the Urdu journal *Nigar*, contributed a series of articles in his journal about 'objectionable' Ahadith that pertained to capturing of slaves, possessing ex-slaves and selling apostates. He also subjected to criticism the prevalent form of Namaz as being an accretion to what had originally been stipulated by the Quran in terms of number of prayers and other related aspects.<sup>83</sup> Having discarded Hadith, Nivaz Fatchpur later went to the extent of declaring the Quran as being the word of Muhammad (ﷺ) and not of God. For

his purpose, he presented a list of questions to Muslim scholars and academics in which he put forward his case against Quran's Divinity. In contrast, Muslima, as a journal of opposing Quran's excellence as Divine text, invited responses from scholars all over South Asia. The essays collected were then published in a special issue of *Al-Bayan*.<sup>34</sup>

Equally surprising was the criticism of *Salah* (Prayer) by a rather conservative senior scholar Khwaja Ahmad Nazam. He accused Balha being under the influence of government authorities for the reason that he did not take any caution to include *Al-Bayan* (Household of Prophet) even though he did cite traditions from those involved in killing Hussain – the beloved grandson of Prophet Muhammad (p.b.t.).

Among the scholars who were so professedly linked with Ummat-e-Madina, Muhsinul Haq (c. 1941) came closest to sharing Ahmad's views on certain aspects of beliefs and practices. He too did not give much importance to the ritual of Namaz. In his view, prior to the Prophet had continued the practice of the People of Book, albeit with some modifications. He argued that if Prophet Muhammad's (p.b.t.) mode of worship was radically different from that of *Umm al-Arab* (the People of Arabia), he would not possibly have led prayers of all the prophets during his heavenly journey as is reported in certain traditions. Yet, he did not discard Hadith altogether nor was completely dismissive of Prophet's authority.<sup>35</sup> But he did call for a criterion for Hadith authentication which was urgent enough to give way to the Quran as the only arbiter between truth and falsehood. For him, the notion of rationalism was unworthy of dependence because of its contradiction to the one master – family background and hereditary inclinations of the scholar.<sup>36</sup>

He was not alone that by 1912 sporadic dissenting voices with regard to the sound narrations in general and Hadith in particular had begun to be raised by both Western educated and more traditionally trained scholars who had no outward association with Ummat-e-Madina or any other Muslim group for that matter. What helped to promote these ideas even further was the regular publication of *Salah* which served as a platform for showcasing Ahmad ul-Din's views and counter the polemics of rivals. The journal also promoted links with other scholars who advocated a similar approach regardless of whether the ideas caused or differed with those of Ahmad ul-Din. Not all of them were based in Punjab. Muhsinul Haq, Aslam Javrajpur, Jafar Shah, Phulwaras, Jamana, Imadi and Sayyid Maqbul Ahmad were based in different parts of North India and shared some of Khwaja Ahmad ul-Din's American

was on Hadith even though they were not necessarily inspired by him. They did however contribute articles in *Haqq*, and attended gatherings arranged by the Ummat-i-Muslma.<sup>40</sup>

### 5.9. ASLAM JAYRAJURI (1881-1955) AND THE IDEA OF SUNNAT-I-MUTWATIR

One of the contemporaries of Abdulah Chakralaw and Khwaja Ahmad Raza Khan was Aslam Jayrajuri—professor of History and Islamic Studies at Alama Iqbal Open University and a notable Ahl-i-Hadith scholar. Saadatul Jilal Jayrajuri (d. 1980) Aslam Jayrajuri provided a synthesis of the Hadith corpus in terms of Hadith and Quranic approaches propounded by his like-minded scholars, further the discourse on the questioning of Hadith literature along with the other aspects of ahad paradigm and the relative positioning of Prophetic authority compared to that of Quranic authority, giving forward a detailed conclusion.<sup>41</sup>

In his discussions with Aslam Jayrajuri, I dwelled upon the nature and history of Hadith in detail. As a historian of Islamic history, he was better trained and informed to write extensively about the history of Hadith in light of the socio-political context during the past centuries of Islam and other relevant details. In his works he discredited the existing corpus of Hadith literature. He argued that the instructions given by Prophet Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) against the compilation of his sayings were very clear and were only exceptionally deviated from. He attributed the leading compilation of Ahadith as a method followed by the Prophet's followers but discredited the rest of the exaggerated accounts about Companions like Abu Huraira—the reporting authority for thousands of Ahadith—who has variously been described as keeping the constant company of the Prophet (sallallahu alayhi wasallam) and record all that the Prophet had to offer. The presence of such an enormous staff of reporters and the recording of his words and absence of professional keepers of Hadith records—unlike that for the Quran who were supervised by the Prophet himself—it was no wonder that lay a part of the earliest compilation of Ahadith *Muwatta* was compiled during the second century of Islam while the rest came out as late as the third century.<sup>42</sup> What gave an impetus to this trend was the religious fervor of the Umayyad central authority by the political forces of Umayyads and later Abbassids. In the absence of an agreed upon religious authority which previously was existing among the *Rightly Guided Caliphs*, it was left to individual scholars to find solutions to newly emerging problems in

eright of the temporal pulgana. These writings, gradually came to be derived on the authority of some Hadith.<sup>1</sup> Hence, in order to establish the genuineness of ones religious desire, it became useful and imperative to elevate the status of Hadith to that of the Quran and bas judgements and arguments on the basis of the authenticity of a Hadith cited.

More important than a professionally drafted Ahd al-Quran version of the history of Islamic Asiatic Jarrappurs or final contribution lies coming closer to offering a more convincing solution to the dilemma facing the information seeker resulting from the comparative study of Hadith literature and an absolute adherence with past authorities. This has been done by playing upon the existing distinction between Hadith al-Sunnat instead of demanding the Hadith altogether, Jarrappurs ascribed to it an important historical value but little religious merit, whereas despite the late quality of the Hadith literature and its abundance tabularal-nuqul<sup>2</sup> regarded it as an important source for the history of that period, and as a historical document to which the historians' rule of accuracy could be applied to ascertain the authenticity of the information thus secured could be a reliable source of history as another work on even a geographical history and Surat (biography of the prophet) Ja'ami' has not to add, has a religious bearing, some however was required to have a better source of origin an obvious number as it is transmission. It was through this route that Jarrappur arrived at examining his belief in the Quran as the only source worth offering as the religious authority and a comprehensive and a canon of faith such as better in the early or Ahd al-Nabi of the prophet, the Hadith al-Sunnat and so on. He stated the correct point he is aiming at the Ahd al-Quran, albeit with varying degrees of interpretation and additional quotations, statements and arguments that is essentially component of the belief system of Islam has been let out from the Quran. As long as one believed in the basics outlined by the Quran and only superficially perceived the exoteric aspects of Islam, Simons view were expressed by Sulayman Nadawi, another of Asiatic Jarrappurs, correctly, namely despite the fact that he possessed a more advanced and a more correct understanding of the role and status of the prophet. He remarked:

A large component of such literature deals with historical aspects which are the details, biographies and incidents relating to the Prophet and the



contingencies. Of course, these are not disputable texts. They are as much part of history as any other historical narrative might be. The only difference is that his particular history is more accurate and credible than any other historical narrative in the world. The other portion deals with the morals and the circumstances in which a man is to be engaged in his affairs and rational for example, it emphasises *ad-ala* (the need for justice, virtue, & knowledge etc). These are things which find approval not just from the Q but from the human nature itself. Are these worthy of rejection?

But what if it is based on faith which can be derived from only one thing and that is Revelation. As a text that is revealed, he says he believes in the Quran and the *ahadith* (traditions). Obviously, the controversial traditions are non-existent or are not more than a handful. In these conditions, *Ahadith* cannot be described as sources of Belief.

But with regard to practices, Asim Javraj put it did not endorse the rigid Quran-based ritualization worked upon by Maulwī, Aristotkan and the historical-autonomist shaping of new Islamic modes of worship allowed by Ahmad al-Din. This is because he brings in a plausible concept of *Sunnat-i-Muhammadiyah* and is by no means, from the *Hadith* Wāḥidī perspective, considered the bulk of the *Ahadith* as irregularly reported and hence unusable to meet the criteria as outlined above for a source to have binding religious authority. He defined *Sunnat-i-Muhammadiyah* as a tradition or *Sunnat* of the Prophet that had been in practice by such a large segment of the population over a long period of time that it could not plausibly be untrue. By this account, it became possible to treat it as a sweeping threshold question always posed as the first line of argument by the opponents of *Hadith* to their opponents of determining the details of *Namaz* from the Quran alone or without the use of *hadith*.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, reference to *Sunnat-i-Muhammadiyah* served for him as a convenient means of accepting the present practices of Islamic worship as well as implicitly invalidating it on the basis of *Ahadith*.

However, Asim Javraj's argument also contained an implicit recognition of the right of the Prophet to determine the modes of worship and other Islamic ritual observances. This in turn, implied that the Prophet must have done so on the basis of some authoritative form of revelation that has not been recorded in the Quran. In *Islam governs life*, Asim Javraj regarded the concept of a revelation outside the page of the Quranic text as a later day construct and an irrational approach.<sup>11</sup> In rebutting the argument and reviving the meanings of certain Quranic terms that were used by those who believed in the Prophet's authority and in the revelatory status of his words and actions, Asim Javraj put came

choice to sharing the copyright findings of Mahmud Abdallah Chirani and Khwaja Ahmad ul Din Amritani. In verses about the revelation the *Qur'an* where the term *Kutab* is coupled with another term *sunna*, *amara* or *dekh*, then the latter is another word for the *Qur'an* and it has to accept it as an oblique reference to *Sunnat* or *nahy ghayr ma'ni*. The verses calling upon the believers to follow the footprints of the Prophet were understood by him in consonance with the explanation offered by Ahmad ul Din as an injunction to obey the Prophet *na'iy* or *al-imam* or *al-imam* as the head of the state. The word *addition* in this interpretation was an elaboration of the concept of a central Islamic authority. According to him, the Prophet had two duties to perform as a ruler to act on both one as a prophet and another as a ruler, whereby he was to faithfully relay the message of *Qur'an* as its messenger. In this there was to be a complete heedfulness of the Prophet. The second part of his role as the Prophet was to organize a community supported with a public administrative set up to accede with the guidelines of the *Qur'an* and the Prophet, besides the central Islamic authority and in this capacity to administer the orders settled down disputes, and performed various other tasks relevant to the execution of an effective administration. It was in his capacity as the head of the community that he was to be followed by the believers in all sincerity and obedience as commanded by the *Qur'an*. Hence the call to obedience was to the Prophet's authority as it was for the attainment of *sa'adah* (well-being) and not for his head. As long as Prophet Muhammad (s) was alive and led the Islamic state, obedience to him equalled obedience to Allah. After his death, he cannot pass on to be a prophet since there is no present and all successive ages. Muslims are commanded—in the light of *Qur'anic* verses—to be obedient to the workings of a true Islamic state.<sup>1</sup>

Adnan Khatir's concept of *Hadith* as a source of legislation and his contribution to the re-evaluation of the present modes of worship on the basis of *Sunnat*. Murwani is an admirer of the normative absolute and infallibility that entailed absolute exclusion of the Prophet's legacy from the system of practices of the Muslims and a recognition of a sole reliance to the Muslim, as in the term of *Hadith*. His admission opened the discussion on the status of a *hadith* and the relative positioning of the Prophet's authority and the *Qur'an* to those among the traditional Islamic scholars who, with various reservations about *Hadith* but who did not want to go to the extent of suggesting innovation, i.e., *Hadith* or *Sunnat* based practices and force a *Qur'anic* derivation instead. The re-

most important figures who inadvertently benefited from Asami's efforts in denouncing the discourse, were Jafar Shah Phulwarwi and Tannanna Tanadi.

Jafar Shah Phulwarwi (1902 A.D.) a son of a learned family of Muslim scholars and mystics from Bihar, resolved the inherent contradiction in Asami Jaisaipur's theory of endorsing the prevalent Sufi practices and rituals without recognizing that the Prophet was divinely inspired in instructing them in the first place. For that purpose Jafar Shah elaborated upon both the concepts of prophetic order and revelation.<sup>28</sup> He called for a more clear understanding of differentiation between the Prophet's role as a source of guidance in a conflict with the *amr bi'l-ma'ruf* and his role as a binding adherence on the part of his believers, and his actions as a human being which do not serve as a precedence whose denunciation leads to excommunication. In this regard he denounced the extremes of ascribing an ill-divine or all non-divine status to the actions of the Prophet Muhammad (p.w.a) and the precedents set by him in the light of which transgresses legal norms and interpretations of Quranic text. In reference to the former type of approach towards the Prophet, Jafar Shah said:

Some people are of the view that Prophet is a prophet at all times and therefore his words lay outside his capacity as a prophet. And then they give the example of a supreme judge who is a judge all the way to four hours of his sitting on the bench, somewhere he lies. This is like the Prophet is a prophet at all times and therefore his words are always in the capacity of Prophet. What a Judge says in the house or in a kitchen does not at all have the same position as that of a decision in a court. It is only if he is in the court, his replies in the litigation of Prophet should remain valid. It is as if he is in the court, it does not mean that when ever a prophet says in his capacity of the Prophet or that he does not say it as a thing that is unrevealed.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time Jafar Shah enlarged the scope for prophetic authority by challenging the notion that obedience to the Prophet was limited to what he received as part of the Quran. For that Jafar Shah maintained that the Prophet may not have been guided by his divine word and actions but it can not be denied that in performance of some of his duties he did receive a divine stream of guidance which are strictly outside the pale of the Quran but yet it was as binding for the Muslims as the Quran itself.<sup>30</sup> It is this latter part of the argument that he has added to an otherwise mostly Jaisaipuri version of distinction between prophetic

and non-prophetic roles of Prophet Muhammad (saw). But while Jafar Shah accepted the possibility of a parallel source of Divine guidance and made scope for its due to the Prophet (saw) of Qur'an, it may be at the same time served to mitigate the extent of this non-Quran source and Prophet's authority. This non-Quran source was described by Jafar Shah as a form of intuition which can be and has been experienced by numerous mystics, scholars and normal individuals. It was neither exclusively endowed to the Prophet nor did it rest upon a large portion of Anadith.<sup>10</sup> Hence the ritual practices established by the Prophet came to acquire a revelatory ring, while the non-ritual aspects of his teachings ended as a further part of revelation not a intuition, but rather an outcome of the Prophet's own judgment as an individual with his specific temporal constraints and one's cultural framework.

Ujjar Shah Philwarne, however, defined Ashraf's concept of *Baraka* by associating it only tangentially with Divine influence. It was *Tamanna* (Imad) (1808-97) and he who at first radicalised Ashraf's ideas. It was who furnished systematic theory in Ha'iri as a source of history of Islamic and its belief. In doing this he was guided by his own crude opinion in the scholarship of *Imad* to see an obvious gap to his alone *Imad* the scholars of the *Imad* and *Imad* to tradition. He had gaps of tradition in his reputation of some important Anadith or placing of a stringent criterion for the acceptance of the rest. Like Asaf's *Imad* he did not set out to achieve the goal of any radicalisation of Ha'iri, but merely attempted to bring under the banner of the Qur'an and *Imad* them as being not selectively use as a source of guidance in matters of religion.

Accordingly, *Imad* and *Imad* markedly upholds Ha'iri literature, while adopting a remarkably critical view of its works by and with regard to it a rigorous criterion for scrutiny that effectively reduces its significance and narrows its scope. This can be seen in his radical conspiratorial view of the compilation of *Imad* texts. *Imad* believed that a systematic falsification of *Imad* and popularizing of religious doctrines based on such false reports was a conspiracy hatched by Iranians against by their deities. He stands of *Imad* as a conspiracy regarded as culturally and racially inferior. Once they were overthrown by Arabs and realized the conspiracy of this occupation a strategy was adopted by them to weaken the strength of Arabs by undermining their religion. Hundreds of men were taken from cities and towns of Iran and sent to Arabia where they indulged in the practice of *Imad*. *Imad* and were deputed with serious

companions like Abu Hurrara for instructions in the new faith. They soon came to regard Umar as the major impediment to the extension of driving a wedge in the religious beliefs of Muslims. Umar was finally assassinated by an Iranian named Abu Juhaim. As they had firmly established their roots among the Muslims, these hypocrites spread to different parts of the Muslim empire away from Mecca where they had a better chance of polluting the minds of the newly converted Muslims. In this way they began to sow seeds of dissent among the Muslims by posing as supporters of Ali whom they projected as the rightful heir of the Prophet. Their efforts bore fruit when a civil war broke out after the assassination of Caliph Umar and as the events unfolded – finally culminated in the martyrdom of Husayn. But these Persian hypocrites realised that civil war would not weaken the Muslims so they began their planning to deprive the Muslims of the source of their spiritual life – the Quran. But that was a difficult task since the Quran had already been well preserved in the hearts of its adherents and its oral recitation. The only alternative way to come up with a parallel source which could dwarf the importance of the Quran in matters of religious practice and belief. In the efforts to promote compatibility of Ali and his progeny, these Persians had collected hundreds of Ahadith finding them favourable to their mission of dividing the Muslims along sectarian lines. Hence, from the martyrdom of Husayn onwards, these Persians planned to spread false Hadith on a mass scale. This trend became so widespread that it even fooled scholars succumbed to it.<sup>10</sup> Yet at the same time, Imams maintained the view that

Although I do not regard this as an uncorrupted Hadith as it is said to be, it is as much more acceptable than the substandard research and findings of Encyclopaedia Britannica about the standard Hadith. It is as much more trustworthy and beneficial as mine. This is what I did because it is for a more comprehensive religion, instead of the restricted one of Ahl al-Bait. But I also believe that new Hadiths can be produced and that it is not only the Ahl al-Bait who are subject to error. We must always use the Quran as a guide and in the future decide on their identity and authenticity.

Asge – the author's word used by Imams on the basis of some criterion, who did not have authority to impose a standard Quranic explanation or establish a paradigmatic text. I know Ali has a series of statements which had a wide acceptance among the Muslims. I do know the Prophet's role in promulgating and establishing religious practices but did not look up to Imams as a credible or essential work in such procedures.

set by him. According to Imadi far from providing guidance as to the ways of the Prophet regarding prayer and worship, Ibadī had in effect served to deprive the Muslims of the Prophet's instructions to his followers regarding prayers, the manner in which they had observed after the Prophet's death and during the times of rule of his Rightly Guided Caliphs and pious Companions.<sup>19</sup> In relying on *Shi'ah*—Murwāt or continuous practice as a more reliable source worthy of imitation, Imadī was guided by Asām Jāṣṣapūrī and, to some extent, Muḥṣa Ghulāt Ahmad's ideas.

What further reinforced the centrality of the Quran in Imadī's conceptualization of Islamic sources of guidance was his thorough critique of those Ahādīth which undermined the significance of the Quran. Unlike other critics of Hadīth whose objections to Hadīth were limited to an analysis of its contents, Imadī was erudite enough to thoroughly analyze the traditions on the basis of their presumably credible chains of transmission as well. His most revealing discovery in a *had*-related criticism of Hadīth indicted Shāhib Zuhri, who is generally considered as the first *Muhaddith* to have started collecting traditions under rubrics from the Umayyad Caliph, Umar bin Abd al-Azīz, as a Shi'a aiding the Umayyad mission of marginalizing the teachings of Imam and causing rifts among its followers.<sup>20</sup> Zuhri's foreboding act, even more in this regard was censured by Imadī as a projection of traditions about the Quran which cast doubt about the integrity of its text. The reasons for which traditions were fabricated to analyze the historical background of the Quranic text later was to serve the purpose of those who were being criticized for giving due consideration to oral records of the Prophet's sayings. The oral character of Quranic record was then used to cast aspersions on the very nature of the Quranic text as well. No less than 138 contradictions in the present Quranic text were recorded by Abū al-Ḥasan Mas'ūdī.<sup>21</sup> This demotes the Quran to the level of other divinely inspired scriptures which are alleged by Muslim critics to have been tampered over a period of time. Hence, it was of vital significance for Imadī to insist on the compilation of the Quran during the lifetime of Prophet.

After condemning Zuhri as being a Shi'a on the basis of *riyāl* criticism, Imadī scrutinized the narrative which had been reported by Zuhri concerning the compilation of the Quran. He furnished evidence from selected *had*īth to prove that it was the practice of the Prophet to recite the Quranic verses to his Companions present on the occasion of revelation. These verses were not only memorized by them, but also noted

now on parchment made up of deer skin. In contrast to the whole of the Quran was written and preserved during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (peace) and the revelation that God has completed is significant was a clear indication that the process of revelation had been completed during his lifetime. A similar statement that a message must have been revealed at least one-and-a-half years before the Prophet's death at least a few months prior to his death as is generally believed.<sup>12</sup> There are also traditions to the effect that the Prophet instructed his Companions to recite the whole text of the Quran and he made corrections. In one of the Ahadith, the Prophet is reported to have advised his Companions not to carry the Quran during journeys lest it falls in the hands of the enemies. If the Quran had not been compiled in a book form during the Prophet's lifetime then what was it that they carried while going on their journeys and when the Prophet asked them not to carry with them.<sup>13</sup> The book's compilation was hence kept in a box (see below) at the pulpit of the mosque in Medina later as a safety precaution against the conspiracies hatched by the hypocrites. The collection was passed on to 'Uzayr bin 'Umayr who is considered one of the wives of the Prophet.<sup>14</sup> These historical details were usually invoked to deconstruct the traditional account which described the undertaking of the Quran's compilation as a collective endeavour to the killing of scores of men (reciters of Quran) during the battle of Yamama in AD 632.

The compilation of the Quranic text during the lifetime of Muhammad must necessarily preclude the possibility of any forged verses from becoming a part of the canonisation. The Book's compilation not only a challenge but a serious historical imposition to abrogate any ruling of the Quran by Hadith.

Towards the later years of his life however Muhammad had shifted more favourably towards Hadith as could be seen in some of his writings against 'Umayr bin Ahmad Parwez and the *Kitab al-Quran* published around early 100s.<sup>15</sup> But even then he never came close to sharing an important belief of the authenticity of Hadith, namely like the majority of the religious scholars,

#### 5.10. EMERGENCE OF NEW TRENDS IN HADITH CRITICISM AMONG THE ULAMA

The engagement of critique is and deconstructionist theological disputations had gained an increasing momentum during the 1940s with the coming into prominence of such A'la'i Qasbi figures as Aslam

Jayrapuri and later Tahir Na'imani and Ghulam Ahmad Parwez among many others. Now that Aslam Jayrapuri had consciously tried to offer a middle ground between the apparently irreconcilable extremes of a Quran-based rigidity or laxity in matters of ritual observances as stipulated by Maulwī Abdurrah Chakrawali and Khwaja Ahmad-ud Din Anwar, respectively, the Ahl al-Quran could afford to at least claim to be arguing from a discursive space within the larger Islamic tradition. The writings of the Ahl al-Quran scholars, each with degrees of variance from one another, became more effective with the use of rational canons of Hadith criticism and the acceptance of the possibility of the Prophet's authority in establishing religious practices among the Muslims and his reception of non-Quranic sources of revelation. As they increased the chances of the acceptability of the varied doctrines, no longer insisting on the scrapping of every non-Quranic aspect of religion and accepting a more active role for the Prophet in the shaping up of religious codes and practices, the challenge for their new Ulama was heightened: they had to make efforts to stem the tide of rising scepticism among various sections of Muslim intelligentsia and force a reevaluation of many of their own stated views on Hadith.

In meeting the latter part of this challenge, most of the Ulama adopted the strategy of carrying on their reverence for Hadith while practising, agreeing to the possibility, rejection of Hadith literature. They wanted to give the impression that a degree of scepticism regarding Hadith had been in existence in the days of the Prophet himself and this was the reason why utmost care was taken by the Companions and those generations of scholars who followed them to make sure that anything reported and established among the Muslims as a precedent or practice on the behalf of the Prophet was a solidly authenticated. The scrutiny was carried out on the basis of *isnad* as well as *dariyat* and hence it would be incorrect to assert, as most Ahl al-Quran critics of Hadith were claiming, that there remains a large scope for the scrutiny of Hadith on the basis of *darayat*. While in principle it was still possible to doubt the authenticity of a particular Hadith by someone as learned as the great traditionalists of yesteryears, for all practical purposes such an endeavour was considered unnecessary for the fear of opening up needless debates among the Muslims on petty issues. But the question of the Prophet's authority to offer the only interpretation of the Quran and give practical shape to what has been abstractly touched upon in the Quran was, for the Ulama, an article of faith and a settled question for which they did not allow any space even for a theoretical reconsideration. The study of



emergence of new trends among the Ulama had to focus on what was being demanded by the Ahl al-Quran for the re-evaluation of Islamic literature and the extent to which the Ulama went in adopting it as the means of countering the position taken by their rivals.

A look at the changes in the stance of some conservative Ulama with regard to Hadith reveals that among the more established Muslim centres, Al-Farooq, Haddad, Deoband and Bareilly, there was no serious or systematic re-look at the needs of a revision. Even at an individual level no significant scholar seems to have been touched by the idea of a questioning of Hadith literature. Maulana Ubaidullah Sindhi, a notable scholar of Deoband known less for his religious writings than for his efforts to revive Urdu literature, writing on the British rule from Afghanistan during the First World War, was an exception in this regard. He expressed his concern about the conservative *Bukhari* and declared it unsuitable literature for any newly rising Muslim community. He stated that 'Abul A'ali, Ubaidullah Sindhi and others preserve *Mawana* even with *Shah Waliullah*. There has been some who came to suggest addition to the traditional methodologies regarding Hadith and later perceiving a continuation of old polemics from it did not avoid excessive criticism with a particular sect and could scarcely be described as liberal. This position was maintained by his followers who came to be accepted as the true ideological or the reformations that they had set up.

The most prominent example in the conservative stance was the Ahl al-Quran who were at a meeting a refreshing look at the campus of Islam. In literature in the light of revised concepts of Islam, the Ahl al-Quran, a founder of the Islamic Journal, Ahmad Raza Khan, took the extreme positions taken by both the proponents and opponents of Hadith. He attempted to establish a middle ground *between the extremes* between the extremes of complete disavowal of Hadith on the one hand and its status as authentic source of Ahadith. According to him the proponents had exaggerated the virtues of the traditions and the opponents had exaggerated the virtues of the traditions. He also described both as a double-edged sword in the field of preservation and transmission of Hadith. He was well known for his extreme of claiming that he suspected every single Hadith in terms of its authenticity and validity as a binding source of religious guidance. He accurately perceived that the Ulama who had no further additions were required. While Maulana Raza Khan's services rendered to the Ahl al-Quran were no more than possible, it is clear in their work. Unlike his other contemporaries and like-minded scholars, he was not simply aware of the theoretical possibilities of a scrutiny of Hadith traditions but a so pointed out some

of their lineage and suggested ways by which they could be plugged. It favoured the idea of relying more on the principle of *darayst* as a tool for ascertaining the validity of Hadith by scholars well-versed in all branches of Islamic knowledge system, but most importantly in Hadith and Fiqh. He thought that such a scholar would not only be conversant with the requirements for an authentic relaying of a tradition but would also be able to apply his specialized knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence to determine the way in which the content of a Hadith could be understood and derive from it possible doctrinal explications, legal principles and moral lessons. In this regard the figure of Abu Hanifa as a traditionist-jurist served for him—as it did for Shihab al-Nu'mani—the idea prototype.

As already discussed, Abu Hanifa is reported to have relied on less reliable traditions in the presence of more authentic ones because he was able to assess the merits of the material available to him in the capacities of both a jurist and a traditionist.<sup>14</sup> Maqdisi himself cited some *Ahadith*<sup>15</sup> which had been recorded in authentic Hadith collections but which were found by him to be absolute fabrications or at least misunderstood because of traditionists' failure to apply *darayst* jurisprudential methods of scrutiny. What incensed the proponents of *ahadith* was his suggestion that a scholar who had acquired an ability to read the mind of the Prophet (*Al-Faṣṣṣa Sharḥ al-Baṣṣa*) should have an extensive authority in dealing upon the merits of such *Ahadith* on the basis of *darayst*. He referred to *Al-Faṣṣa Sharḥ al-Baṣṣa* as a 'experienced jeweller who could differentiate between a jewel and the stone. He had to be a scholar who

has deeply studied most of Hadith literature to develop an insight for evaluating *Ahadith*. With continuous study and expertise, a person can acquire an ability to be a *Muṣṣaṣṣa Sharḥ al-Baṣṣa* as the true spirit of Islam gets engraved in his heart and reflects. A scholar with a glance he can make out whether a particular Hadith is in fact the statement of the Prophet or not. Or could he have acted in a particular way or not?<sup>16</sup>

Although conceptually Maqdisi opened up Hadith literature to criticism on an apparently vaguely conceived idea but in his own writings he appeared to be very selective in dismissing traditions on these counts. Even for a very few traditions, Maqdisi did not dispute the status and contents of the rest of *Sahih al-Bukhari*. Also, he tried to offer explanations for certain objectionable traditions instead of discarding them on *Darayst* basis which were taken by many among modern-day Muslims

as a source of embarrassment and used by the deniers of Hadith for the refutation of their doctrines. One such tradition that he defended was about Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) wife Aisha demonstrating the way the Prophet took his bath. Mauidud came to the defence of this tradition by arguing that the witnesses of this act were no strangers to Aisha and were her close blood relatives (*awliyan*). Secondly, a screen was put between her and the observers. The objection that the screen must have been a latticed one to allow the view of the private details was met only by Mauidud on the ground that the purpose of Aisha was to show whether a bath could be taken by using a limited amount of water or not.<sup>11</sup> In the same way he defended the disclosure of private details of the Prophet's life on the ground that it had to be done for the benefit and guidance of Muslim women.

In Mauidud's flourishing of the idea for the review of Hadith literature it can be seen that his prescribed principles for Hadith criticism do not extend beyond an incantation for application of *strategic* principles by a scholar with expertise in matters of *fiqh* and *usul* jurisprudence. He does not have objections to the lunar-based criteria for Hadith criticism and uses a strictly traditional line of argument in his defence against the revisionist criticisms offered by the Ahl al-Quran. This is clearly seen in his acceptance of a single report as a valid source for religious beliefs and practices.<sup>12</sup> It is worth noting that he does not yield to arguments favouring the Quran as the only source of religious guidance qualified to enter in fundamental beliefs of Islam simply because it alone has been preserved in an unadulterated form and related with continuously varied and multiple chains of transmission. For him a single report can be as much a source of some essential component of faith as a widely reported one. He thus again he rebutted the argument of the likes of As'ad Jazayirani who justified the prevalent modes of religious practices on the basis of *Sunnat* i.e. *Marwa'i*. One of Mauidud's reasons for giving the Ahadith—now a single report—an importance similar if not greater to that of *Sunnat* i.e. *Marwa'i* in the moulding of Muslim practices was to stress a point on these practices as being virtually unaltered unlike that of other religions.<sup>13</sup>

The second important argument regarding the categorisation of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a *Nabi* or Prophet and *Huwwa* reserved by As'ad Jazayirani to gain legitimacy for Ahl al-Quran doctrine pertains to the role and duties of the Prophet. This was also taken up by Mauidud. He is of the opinion that the possibility of demarcating a line between Muhammad (PBUH) and Muhammad the Prophet of Ahl

for that distinction had not been made in the Quran. That all the Prophet's words and actions were to be taken as divinely guided and sanctioned, and an extension of his prophetic mission. Even in the personal choices for food and clothing the Prophet's preferences were accordance with the dictates of Sharia and hence served as precedents for the Muslims when it came to making decisions in these matters in this case – and other such instances where believers were enjoined upon by the Prophet himself to exercise their own judgment. Even Maududi had to admit that the distinction between the Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa alayhi salatu wa alayhi salam) the Prophet and the man might appear blurred. But for Maududi, the making of rules did not lead to an inference that certain aspects of Prophet Muhammad's words and actions were personal and hence non-binding, while the rest were religious binding. It was exactly the opposite extreme ones judgment in itself had been granted by the Shariat through the Prophet. So the availing of that principle which in any case would be within the precincts of other specifications generally laid out by the Shariat, the believers would still be following the commands of the Prophet. It is even difficult whether it accord with one's own judgment or the ruling of the Shariat can be traced back to the Prophet as assigned to Muhammad (sallallahu alayhi wa alayhi salam) being the Prophet of Allah and the seal of the prophet of His world. The authority was neither temporally constrained nor confined to the settlement of political-administrative affairs alone.

Among those espousing traditional understanding of Islam, Hamidullah (Dr. Habibullah) was one of the most prominent figures of the 20th century and his book *Amr-i-Akbar* with same title chosen to share the Islamic approach of sanctity of the prophet's final observations as the basis of Sunnat instead of Hadith.

In his criteria for accepting *Ahadith* he only accepted "known" accepting only those traditions which did not contradict the basic tenets and clear expositions of the Quran – or the essence of Quran, which was his main field of scholarly excellence. He again placed down the importance of Hadith by attempting to interpret the Quran from the Quran itself. Where extra-Quranic references were necessary to the interpretation of the Quran, he – and later his disciples – early availed sources other than Hadith. He did give most consideration to the pre-Islamic Arabic literature as the source to acquire information about the social and context of the age of Quranic revelation and deep understanding of the language and literary techniques of that period. He considered his preference of acceptable because for them, the Holy

is a collection of pre-Islamic Arabic literature, mostly poetry, that in no way came close to the enthusiasm of Hadith literature. Nevertheless, Ishah's principles of exegesis was an emphasis on the composition of the Quran and its internal symmetrical coherence to interpret the Quran from its own text.<sup>1</sup> This was followed by Sa'at al-Murwaa as a preferred source for the interpretation of Quran. Hence, Hadith, for Ishah, was of marginal significance in the exegesis of the Quran and came into consideration after the above-mentioned sources were beautifully put to use. This insignificance of Hadith for Ishah is also corroborated by the fact that in his *tafsir* spanning over 157 pages and 9 volumes, only 10 Ahadith have been quoted.<sup>2</sup>

Ishah did not had a different set of preferences when it came to establishing the essentials of Islamic practices. He talked in line with the thought of those scholars who have an overpowering belief in the authority of the Prophet to establish the religion and is different opinions in accordance with his direct or indirect divine guidance. What he believed that the Prophet was divine-guided in giving practical shape to the services of Namaz and Hajj, he accepted them as valid, unlike Mauidudi—nor because of textual support from Hadith but on the basis of Sa'at al-Murwaa. It implied that one was compelled to observe the prevalent ritual observances not because some reliable narrators had recorded the prescriptions clearly in an authentic book of tradition but because they had been in continuous practice in a more or less mutually agreed upon mode of ages. In matters of such too, Ishah limited the role of Hadith to subjecting it to more scrutiny of the verses of the Quran. Only those Ahadith which had been in conformity with practice were regarded by him as definite as Quran. For the single reports which comprised a bulk of Hadith in nature and whose status was the main dispute between Ash'ari Qadiri scholars like al-Qasbi, Mauidudi and the opponents of Hadith, he suggested a criterion based on *maud' darat* and *mu'patat* as with the Quran.<sup>3</sup> As a member of the *al-madaniyya* team for some years, when shared Mauidudi's view that *Sunnat Rasool* is not inferior to *Qur'an* as he found it was in the case of *al-Hadith*. He used to be a source of joy to men of errors. He believed that the scholars of yesteryears had developed such a strength and it should not come as a surprise if any other individual with a similar depth study and sincere piety was able to attain similar capabilities.<sup>4</sup>

A couple of proponents of Hadith, Amin Ahmad alah was probably the only scholar with university credentials who shared "madaniyya" type of Ahl al-Quran thinking. He believed in the divine impeccability of the Prophet and his authority to formulate the beliefs and practices of

the religion. But he neither accepted Hadith as an undisputed vehicle of authoritative source of this tradition nor did he extend unequalled recognition to the compiled Hadith works as devoid of gross errors or serious lapses. His preference was to locate the part of this tradition which is the repository of essential belief system of Islam directly in Quran by various non-Hadith sources and practices from Sunnah-i-Muawwath' in such cases Hadith merely served as an appendage to some other more reliable source and not as the main argumentative authority or the only representative of Prophet's tradition. Thus in this way the principle of authenticity for the derivation of beliefs and practices could be established instead of preference for any particular source but not at the expense of the Prophet's divine status or that of his words and actions.

### 5.11. UMMAT-I-MUSLIMA UP TO 1952

Ummat-i-Muslima with its journal *Bulagh* and later *Al-Bayan* continued to make its presence felt in Amritsar and beyond, even after the death of its patron, Dehlee ke Barwa-e-Ahmad-ud-Din Amritsari in 1940. One of the important tasks for the Ummat-i-Muslima was to ensure the completion of Quran's commentary started by Ahmad ud Din a decade ago on the insistence of his followers and which was periodically being published in *Bulagh*. It is ironical that a large compendium of Ahmad ud Din's Tafsi'r was published posthumously and was based on the oral record of his weekly Quranic addresses at Ummat-i-Muslima's mosque though he, all his life, remained sceptical of the Hadith literature as it was not reliably and faithfully recorded and written down during the Prophet's lifetime.<sup>1</sup> Ahmad ud Din's death did not condemn Ummat-i-Muslima to oblivion as was the case with their counterparts in Lahore. On the contrary, they achieved a moderate degree of organizational success. Annual gatherings of like minded scholars were held on regular basis, special issues of *Bulagh* and *Al-Bayan* were taken out on special occasions and a few buildings were built to establish the organization on a sounder basis. By 1942 construction of a mosque was completed. It was spacious enough to be used for religious and other congregations. A room adjacent to the mosque was stocked with books and research material to facilitate research on theories relating to the ideology of Ummat-i-Muslima. The Ummat-i-Muslima even managed to secure enough funds to advertise and pay for a trained preacher who could reach out to people and familiarize them with Ummat-i-Muslima's version of Islam.

Sanaullah Amir later continued his tirades against Nawaz Ahmad and the Amirians and his followers in Ummat-i-Madina. Even though no direct polemic took place between Sanaullah and Ahmad-ud-Din after 1937, the former remained in aught to criticize the latter when a religious discussion or issue involved by his adherents. After Ahmad-ud-Din's death, he took to respond to criticisms thrown their way by Sanaullah via primarily (if not exclusively) Hakim Ahsan Ali Amir. Sanaullah questioned Ummat-i-Madina about the documents relating to various acts whose permissibility or impermissibility was to be found in Hadith alone.<sup>10</sup> This, along with other queries sent by the sympathizers and opponents of the movement alike, was dealt with by Ahsan Ali Amir in a long periodical column in the *hauz* 'Qur'an only approach'. He did not find it necessary to look for verses that had a direct bearing to the question asked but only pointed to general themes of Qur'anic text and more of its workings on a related issue to suggest an open ended interpretation to the questioner to him to draw his own conclusions. The source he found abundantly cited from the unimpeachable source of Qur'anic exegesis that luxurious items like silk and gold were to be avoided in all modest or ways of life, as understood by the Qur'an intended to deal with among the Muslims.<sup>11</sup> He cited many aspects of religion wholly unrelated to the Qur'an. Ahsan and Ummat-i-Madina's approach repeated Ahmad-ud-Din's doctrine of making *ahadith* *hadeeth* whenever necessary in the same vein as the Prophet would borrow from other religious groups inhabiting Arabia without considering its Divine In origin at all.<sup>12</sup>

It is hard to picture the publication of a journal like *Ummat-i-Madina* coming out of a few tract writers by sensitive religious activists. The focus of these works was to make a sharp and often rational critique of Hadith literature without any corresponding emphasis on Qur'an. In the 1930s, even the abridged *Shari'at* under the pseudonym *Hidayat* by the *Ummat-i-Madina* abridged author evoked considerable controversy by systematically rejecting along the historical laws and uncorroborated *ahadith* by the Prophet or his *companions* was by a professionalized researcher and not by a trained religious scholar. The style of reasoning and value of the arguments was much in consonance with Western style of historiography and was alien to the tastes of those with a similar academic background or could not do much with the mass of *hadiths* and sayings of the Prophet in a focused and direct manner. The simplicity and straightforwardness of this approach as well as the sensitivity of the issues regarding the elements of *hadeeth* and life of Prophet's humanity touched upon in the book, was the reason

why such statements as Sayid Ali 'Abd al-Mawdudi felt a serious response to. Mawdudi was more concerned with opening a scientific framework by which the type of criticism by *Ulayq* could be that of defects of Hadith among college graduates whose members were awarded during the 1950s could be addressed. Instead of giving rationale for every Hadith criticized by *Ulayq* for Mawdudi said, since that Hadith was not the only material used by opponents to defend 'Islamic' similar objectionable teachings were found by the opponents within the Quran and it was for this reason that a Muslim should not insist on being taught only messages that was a source for the scholars and teachers.<sup>10</sup> But his 1955 June decisions taken by *Jaami' al-Ahwal* specific Ahadith Hating or Sahih al-Mawdudi *Ma'arif* attempted responding to them. One of the interesting aspect of this debate between the two was the issue of the Prophet's marriage to more than one woman. If Hadith in Sahih al-Bukhari, the authenticity of Hadith found in *Shahih* it was necessary to verify the marriage as he reported age of marriage and that by using Quranic texts he offered that the prerequisite of any marriage was not a woman's age as it mentioned in the Quranic texts, but it is reported in different individuals at a different age with different conditions and environment paying their own as well. In case of Aisha, it could be presumed that she had an age necessary for the age of marriage for this reason she was married to the Prophet. Mawdudi's criticism of this episode was based on historical evidence about later events of Aishah's life. Aisha married to the Prophet came against the ruling that the minimum condition of Quranic marriage is to be older but he waves the Prophet's marriage to their homes till their reach the age of Aisha was nine at the time of the marriage that she should have been forty by the time they took place which was in the 10th *Ulayq* for Aisha ought to have been older than 10 at the time of marriage or not violate the Quranic injunction by the time of the Battle of Camel. For Hassan al-Banna's case, a contradiction in *Jaami' al-Ahwal* approach who earlier had stated that the Prophet married an old woman, contradicted between others.<sup>11</sup>

*Ulayq* for creation was innovative a growing trend among members of *Ummah* Muslim intellectuals in the 1950s. Its contents more rational than those of *Al-Nashra*. It was at that time as the *Ummah* or *al-Jalal* Jalal Jalal *Ummah* began to contribute regular article for *al-Sayid* since then the journal was sporadically published in the periodical before it was brought out as a new journal of *Ummah* Muslim published in Bahy al-Jalal many years as an apostate and teaching



short Mahmud Anarampala *Ishtah ul-Islam* and other similar literature by Swan, Datanand and Lekh Ram before he came under the influence of Allama Mashrooqi *Tarbiyat* in 1938.<sup>40</sup> This is amply demonstrated in *De Gharab* where Mashrooqi's approach draws upon scientific evidence to emphasise Qur'anic consistency with the 'Book of Nature' even at a microscopic level of life and supports pursuit of material gains for worldly well-being as an instrument of God's construction of his faithful servants. Umar al-Mu'ayyid *De Iqbal* came out in 1949 in which he made an incisive criticism of 'salafite' literature. He did more than any scholar of similar ideas on Hadith in explicitly bring forth controversial details about the Prophet's marital life. In fact his book was the first – and probably the only – work in Urdu by a Muslim scholar which laid a perspective on the private details of the personal life of the Prophet and commented upon them, at times in a rather over-enthusiastic, satirical and humorous manner. In his views on the authority of the Prophet as an extended view that unsparingly denounced the Prophet as a reformer whose task was only to bring new or mat without there being a possibility of him assuming a position of authority.<sup>41</sup>

With political upheavals bringing about considerable changes in colonial South Asia, the *De Gharab* and the *De Iqbal* were heavily impacted by that of defining 'nationalism' and unity of a state. The independence of Pakistan in 1947 brought in its wake much distress and at the same time, opened new windows of opportunity for the rise of Urdu as *Musawat*. The organisation had to migrate from Amirias leaving behind its mosque, madrasa, library and bank deposits. Assets so avidously acquired over a period of 15 years became the new headquarters of the organisation where it was awarded a pension as compensation for the loss of its Amiria. *De Gharab* resumed publication in 1947 with a dedication issued in the name of Qasim Anwar. It was now published by Khwaja Ghaffar *Ughra Akhtar* with contributions made by Muhammad Hanif, Anwar Khwaja Sakirullah, son of Khwaja Abulhasan Ali Nadwi along with other previous members of the organisation. During its brief tenure which lasted till 1952, *De Gharab* contributed to the ongoing discussions about the Islamic constitution and political system of the nascent Islamic state.

Like its doctrinal approach where authority of the past and precedents set by the Prophet, Muhammad, prevailed on Qur'anic religious affairs, materialistic Umar al-Mu'ayyid extended a similar *sorte hancie* authority in power for affairs pertaining to state and governance.

With the cessation of *Al-Bayan's* publication, Ummat-i-Muslima's written contributions to the disputations on the status of Hadith and authority of the Prophet came to a halt. What remained of Ummat-Musluma was its centre in Lahore, Dar-ul-Quran, where weekly lectures were held on various aspects of the Quran. This arrangement continues till recently before the possession of the building was illegally wrested from the surviving members of Ummat-i-Musluma by a jihadi outfit.<sup>1</sup>

## 5.12. CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to address some of the theoretical presumption outlined in the 'Introduction' of this study. First, the diversity of opinion on the part of various Ahl al-Quran scholars has been analyzed to show that the Ahl al-Quran movements cannot be subsumed under any narrow definition, nor a unified or internally homogenous body of religious doctrines can be ascribed to them. Second, it has shown how Ahl al-Quran's deconstruction of the Is'ad paradigm led to the opening up of Islamic religious traditions for revision, reform and contestation. An attempt has also been made to gauge the impact of the Ahl al-Quran movements. It has been shown to be academically significant but not outright popular at the mass level. Its popularity among the college-educated Muslims has been highlighted by referring to the writings of a Muslim graduate. Also, the fact that Ahl al-Quran ideas forced at least partial questioning of the doctrine of Hadith among some of the Ulama proves that by the 1930s the Ahl al-Quran ideas had come to occupy an important part of the religious polemics among various Muslim groups.

## NOTES

1. Ian Talbot, 'Violence, Migration and Resettlement: the Case of Amritsar', in Ian Talbot and Shinder Thandi, eds. *People on the Move: Punjabi Muslims and Post-Colonial Migration* (Karachi, 2004), 29. Some of the top names of well-known Muslim academics and writers from Amritsar are Sa'adat Hasan Manto, Iqbal Feroz (cf. Bin Hughes), Sayyid Ahn Said, A. Hamid and Saif Tabassum. There did exist some degree of intellectual freedom of religion as borne out by the fact that an atheists club comprising of former Muslims and Hindus like Abdul Kader Malik and Masar Mas Ram held regular discussions with scholars of other faiths on topics dealing with existence and unity of God.
2. For more comprehensive account of Muslim organizations in Punjab cf. Ahmad Sa'ad *Muselmannaan-e-Punjab ki Namaj aur Fath-i-Anjumanayn ik tafayyufi Ahl-i-a* (Lahore, 2004).
3. For more details of Ahmad Sa'ad *Anjuman Islamiyya Amritsar 1847-94 Ta'arufi ussi Syar-i-Khidmat* (Lahore, 1986).

- [illegible]

22. Little else is known about his public activities all these years except that he engaged in discussions with some non-Muslims on different occasions on a variety of issues, including a debate in the merits and demerits of flesh eating. The debate was held under the aegis of Arwah Debating Club in Amritsar in 1904. In order to provide the Muslims with a platform for free religious discussions and counter the propaganda of rivals, Ahmad-ud-Din helped establish an Islamic Debating Club in Amritsar. He appeared to have interests in the lively religious debates of the city. He is said to have written a type of religious propaganda of a local group, already referred to, in 1900. *Khush* 5; see Ahmad-ud-Din, 25. Due to his deep interest in acquiring knowledge of different religions, he even attended discussions organized in private sitings by Baha preachers from Iran who had arrived in Amritsar in 1907. Cf. *Secret Punjab Factor: Aspects of Intelligence*, Vol. XXIX, No. 12, 2 November 1907, 3025.
23. These letters were later published in a book titled *Dirbas ul-Quran* (Amritsar) n.d. to help publicize Ahmad-ud-Din's views on Hadith and 'fellowness' of his anti-s arguments in defence of it.
24. *Ibid.*, 2.
25. *Ibid.*, 8.
26. *Ibid.*, 49.
27. Mohammad Husayn Arshadur assumed a respectable status as a scholar of Iqbal studies. Arshad spent a lot of time in the company of Ahmad-ud-Din and was greatly inspired by his views on the Quran and Hadith. However, later in his life, Arshad seemed to have developed a respect for Hadith literature. For details about Arshad's life cf. *Baqat-ul-hayat* (Rawalpindi) 37: 1-2 (November-December 1985); Asht-Nombar Muhammad Zafar-ul-Haq Chishori, 'Muhammad Husayn Arshad aur unki 'firman aur Adab' Khudmar MPhil Thesis, Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad 2001.
28. Sayyid Ahmad Arshadur ridiculed Umar al-Musayyima with the epithet of Umar al-Musayyima—a reference to Musayyima who made a fake claim to prophethood during the lifetime of Muhammad (peace) and was defeated to death by the Muslims. *Arwah Bayan* *Arwah-Bayana* 2 October 1936, 4.
29. But *Salagh* strongly condemned the practice of calling Ahl al-Quran followers as Chakralawds as it was disallowed by the Holy Quran to call ones opponents with your own name. *Salagh*, 31 November 1944.
30. *Salagh* 8: 3-5 (June-July 1936) 3-2. A more thorough examination of Umar al-Musayyima describes and is differentes with the Ahl al-Quran Tabate, is found in an article published in *Ar-Rayan* in 1946. It says: We, unlike Ahl al-Quran, have no hard feelings for Hadith. Whatever in Ahadith that is rational, fair, in conformity with Quran and worthy of the status of the Prophet, will surely be accepted by us. But the innovation is not our way, nor are we willing to accept it as perfectly reliable as Divine revelation is. We do not believe that the established form of prayer and its arrangement is Divine but find it reasonable to a great extent and follow it. Unlike Ahl al-Quran, we do not believe in creating useless mischief and sociamunism by creating a form of Namaz different from that of the rest. *Ar-Rayan* (Amritsar) 6, 7 July 1946, 28.
31. His ideas about Islamic Universalism and other themes unfolded gradually from 1934 onwards in the form of articles published in *Salagh* and later longer al essays, all appeared in the same journal.
32. Arshad is Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din 'Taimhid' in *Tajir Bayan ul-Ghar* Lahore, Repr. 1965.
33. *Ibid.*, 5.

44. *ibid.* 34
  45. *Amr al-sar* *Tajfur* IV 767
  46. *ibid.* 134
  47. *Baragh*, 5, 8-9 (November-December 1929) Zamima, 1
  48. *ibid.* 5
  49. His argument boomeranged on his face during a later discussion with Barchuk. Writing in *Al-Hayat* in 1937, a British scholar held the view that if Prophet Muhammad (peace) can be accepted as having the actual commanding authority derived from Allah, then by the extension of same logic he be considered as sharing His possessions and 'treasures'—a view turned down by Umar Ali and Ibadin al-Sayid as a polytheistic and resembling the practice of Christianity in their depiction of Jesus. Cited in Sanehi (ed.), *Baragh-al-Qur'an*, 106-7.
  50. *Baragh* 13, 8-9 (November-December 1929) Zamima, 7
  51. *ibid.* 28. In his significant presentation of the arguments of Sayyid Allah Amir-Asad and Ahmad-ud-Din Amir-Asad, Ghaz. Mahmud Phansompai sided with the latter as shown by the following figure drawn by him. (God = Actual Commanding Authority) and (Prophet = Actual Continuing Authority with the sanction of God = God with the sanction of God. Hence Prophet = God with the sanction of God. *Baragh* 2, 1 April 1930: 2
  52. Ahmad-ud-Din Amir-Asad. *Baragh-al-Qur'an*, Amir-Asad, *ibid.* 35
  53. *Tajfur* I, 185
  54. One aspect of Prophet Muhammad's (peace) special status could not be avoided even by Ahmad-ud-Din. That Prophet Muhammad (peace) was the seal of prophethood was acknowledged by him not so much as an external reality but as his prophetic mission put as a concrete argument to preclude the possibility of any scripture either from the Quran being revealed by God to substitute among followers of different religions as a yardstick for such and falsehoods. Such a book could not have been revealed after since human mind was still passing through stages of evolution and nor was it possible to ensure faithful recording of the revelation those are the limitations of a religious text. The Vedas fail to qualify for this role since there is a dearth of sage. The ultimate source for the guidance of mankind could only be that at a time when religious differences have reached their highest stage and need for resolution of such disputes was imminently required. According to Ahmad-ud-Din now that there exists a sacred book like the Quran which speaks in a rational manner resolves disputes, invites people of different faiths to appeal on mutually acceptable principles—new revealed sources are neither required nor can they replace or abrogate the Quran. *Tajfur*, V, 329-32
  55. *Tajfur*, VI 399
  56. *Tajfur*, VI 377. This is a wholly new interpretation of this Surah which has always been understood as prophesying a destructive and painful end to the efforts made and conspiracy plotted against said by the prophet's mole Abu Lahab and his wife.
  57. *Tajfur*, VI 323
  58. *Al-Hayat* Lahore, 2, 1 July 1937: 348, 41
  59. *Tajfur*, I 250-3. Ahmad-ud-Din offers similarly different interpretations of supernatural events ascribed to other Biblical prophets like Noah, Jonah, and Jesus.
  60. *Tajfur*, VI 32
- However, the prophets were to be considered as immutable in only those actions in which they dealt with piety and virtue. For his reason one needed not be following

- Moses' example of slapping the Angel of death or Prophet Muhammad (peace) rebuking a poor blind man. *Tafzir*, IV, 13.
52. *Tafzir*, I, 44. Who could save as a better example for the nearness of prophetic personage than the fact that he had to run for his life in battle against the Meccans and—as Ahmad-ul-Din states in a rather crude and blunt way—could not save the life of even his own sons. *Tafzir*, VII, 274.
53. *Tafzir*, I, 44. An *Baugh* commented, prophets like Abraham and Joseph are reported not to have understood the revelatory information in their dreams and expressed reservations about it. This showed that they were prone to misunderstand the revelation like any other ordinary man. *Baugh* 3, 8 (November 1928): 5.
54. *Tafzir*, VII, 27.
55. *Tafzir*, I, 513.
56. In his criticism of the Ahl-i-Hadith dogma he laid down that if the Quran was not considered to be sufficient in details for matters of religious beliefs and practices then it tantamounts to perceiving the Quran as a book that simply served as an advertisement to tell the people to look up Hadith books for resolution of their problems. According to him, it was illogical to maintain that an advertisement could be more important than the books it referred and recommended to its readers. *Tafzir*, I, 86.
57. *Ar-Rayan* (Amritsar), 2, 5 (May 1940): 15. He further raised the objections that in case Hadith had a similar revelatory status then why was the Prophet reported to have decreed against followers' practice that narrated his untested hadith companions under the commands of the Prophet, decreed portions of revelation meant to serve as a source of guidance for Muslims. *Tafzir*, I, 23.
58. The most important usage of Hadith material in British Punjab by a non-Muslim to attack Prophet Muhammad (peace) and Islam was made by Jaspal who compiled a number of chapters relating to the details of Prophet Muhammad's life in private life. The book was titled as *Rangula Rusul*. Muslims went to court against him but he was handed down mild punishment which were later altogether overruled by a decision from High Court in 1927. He was later assassinated by Iqbal Din of Lahore in April 1919. For more details about Jaspal affair, record of judicial proceedings and the role of Iqbal Din of Zafar Iqbal Nagina, *Qasab Iqbal Din Shahid* (Lahore, 1998). It is surprising to note that such an important incident that stirred the communal politics of Punjab throughout the 1920s and which had a visible link with the objectionable traditions in Hadith literature was not touched upon directly or brought into use to add weight to the arguments by Khwaja Ahmad-ul-Din Amritsari or *Baugh*. However, Sami ulah Amritsari did write a rejoinder to *Rangula Rusul* (C.E. *Musnadul Rusul*, Lahore, repr. ed. 1993).
- These incidents have been noted by Ahmad-ul-Din as limited in four.
59. *Tafzir*, V, 254.
60. *Tafzir*, IV, 50. An article published in *Baugh* insisted that the details of allusion have been given in the Quran and not in the actual act of never for which purification is sought. This was used as an argument to prove that there never were defined rituals of prayers under different Prophets and even during the lifetime of the Prophet Namaz underwent different modifications before a consensus mode of prayer was arrived at and established among the Muslims. Now that there did exist an established form of prayer among the Muslims, it was better for all to stick to it. In case some group or individual wanted to opt for some other way, it should not be allowed to become too serious a cause for clash. *Baugh* 3, 8 (November 1928): 12-4.

62. *Tafsir*, I, 57-8. The minimum number of special prayers per day was calculated by Ahmad-ud-Din as two.
63. By this logic he allowed menstruating women to offer prayers.
64. *Tafsir*, I, 76-7.
65. *Ibid.*, 54. For such views Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din was described by his opponents as proposing a 'Brahmo Samaj Version' of Islam, but Ahmad-ud-Din, however, this was hardly an allegation as he regarded Brahmo teachings as inspired from Quran. *Tafsir* VII, 163.
66. *Tafsir*, I, 272.
67. *Tafsir*, I, 282.
68. *Ibid.*, 286-7.
69. Ahmad-ud-Din rebutted those who project the importance of the Ka'ba—other than its sacredness for Muslims—as the centre of all major religions. He argued that Ka'ba has been the centre for all the religious guides of the world then the people of Makkah must have been familiar with their teachings and doctrines. But no such traces are to be found. *Tafsir*, II, 29.
70. *Tafsir*, 331.
71. *Ibid.*, 336.
72. *Al-Balagh*, 4 (June 1924): 20.
73. Sindhu, ed., *Barthan-ud-Quran*, 49. It is only convenient to suggest that such a direct link between two existed. An extremely learned scholar of letters with an independent mind-set, Azad could not easily have been influenced by a scholar of a lesser stature.
74. Muhammad Husayn Arifa, *Agbot Payamshah-i-Aminat Maghaliyat Ahmadiyya Arifa Amirani* (ed.) Tassaddiq Husayn Raja (Lahore, 1990), 234-47.
75. Shaykh 'Aza Ullah, ed., *Makarib-i-Iqbal*, Lahore, 2005), 97 &.
76. Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore, repr. 1965), (7), 73.
77. *Makarib-i-Iqbal*, 150.
78. Anwar Muhammad Nayaz Ullah Khan Masturqi, *Khawass-ur-Maqalat* (Lahore, n.d.), 59.
79. Masbriqi, *Qur'anic System of Law*, (Dehwar, 1954), 7.
80. Sana'ullah Amirani's *Khawass-i-Jabr-e-shar'ia Ahl-e-Bait* (Amirani, 939) is one example.
81. With the present state of Muslim affairs Masbriqi wished a Muslim were doing work of salvation or reward in the Hereafter. He stated: 'A nation whose present state of affairs is in disarray shall experience the same in the Hereafter. We're living in this world is the correct criteria for wellbeing in the Hereafter Masbriqi, *Khawass-ur-Maqalat*, 236.
82. Sana'ullah Amirani responds: he there is not any pioneering about content analysis as a method for Hadith analysis. The Companions themselves had laid down rules for this practice. One such instance was A'isha's refusal to accept an Umar's narration for its apparent contradiction with a verse of the Quran. Sana'ullah then quoted basic rules for content analysis as specified by him above. This had been done by Sayyid Ahmad Khan as well as his colleague of Hadith studies *Al-Furqan* 22 November 1929: 2-3.
83. Sana'ullah Amirani wrote a series of articles against Niyaz Fatehpuri in his journal from December 1931 onwards.
84. A reprint of these essays is now available in book form titled *Qutub-i-Arqa'ul-Hadith* (Risala-yi-Nawab Ali) Lahore, repr. 2004. Imam Sana'ullah Amirani's student in the field of Hadith, Mufti Muhammad, contributed an article to an anthology serving as a guide to

differences with religious doctrines of the organization which had sponsored its publication.

- 83 Sayyid Mishkibul Haq *Burgh ul-Haq* (Agr. stud.), 1: 4.
- 84 The strong sense of his duty as a *qaym* (steward) to the community was that, according to him, distorted the meanings of the Quran and led to uncalled for changes in the established ritual observances of the Muslims. Haq, *Shari'at-ul-Haq* (Lahore, ca. 1946): 69.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 35.
- 86 *Burgh* 7: 2–3 (May–June 1930), *Zawameer*, 9. One such gathering took place in 1930. The event did not go smoothly as planned because of city administrators' refusal to grant permission to the organizers for making use of a school premises as venue for the event. Alternative arrangements had to be made at the last moment. Among those who were due to participate were the *Imam* (the *qaym*) of the *Madrasa* at Lahore, Shaykh Aiz' Ullah and Ghazi Mahmud Durrani.
- 87 Aslam jayrapuri, *Humayun Durrani* (Lahore: repr. n.d.), 6–6.
- 88 *Ibid.*, 104–6.
- 89 Qutub Ahmad Usmani, '*Maqam-e-Qaym aur Qaym*' (Lahore, 2/1071): 15–6. Manzoor Ahmad Usmani, an important Durrani scholar and historian, conceived that the Hadith were basically a history of the period in which the Prophet lived. Careful measures were adopted for the accurate preservation of only those portions of Hadith literature which were relevant to providing 'essential details' about religion and a degree of accuracy it was allowed to be retained in the non-essential details. Usmani, *Hadith ul-Hadith* (Lahore: 2015), 9, and 232–5.
- 90 *Nasrullah* (Lahore): April–May 1968. Khwairud Naiman jayrapuri, *Durrani* 95. He simply stated that the Prophet himself determined the ritual details of different Islamic observances and that the Muslims had been told to look for an exemplary mode of action in the personage of the Prophet.
- 91 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 92 According to Aslam jayrapuri, the context of the verse makes it clear that it is a reference to some figure or authority which would be present in every age. Maulvi Abu Allah had offered a similar view with the difference that he had understood the term *Rasul* as a synonym for the Quran and not a reference to the central Islamic authority as was the case with jayrapuri. Cf. jayrapuri, *Tarikh-e-Islam ka Jirza* (*Quran ki Rusht-e-Nail*) (Lahore, 1995), 10.
- 93 jayrapuri, *Durrani*, 94.
- 94 Although some of Jafar Shaiq Pashawar's works – this some appeared during the life of Aslam jayrapuri – it is not so apparent that Jafar Shaiq was consciously extending jayrapuri's thesis or that he regarded him as his direct inspiration. A contrast has been drawn between the two at his posthumous conference on the development of discourse on the role and authority of the Prophet and the concept of revelation.
- 95 Pashawar, *Ushwah-e-Mawla* (Lahore, 1999), 104.
- 96 He gave the example of the compilation of the Quran which, according to him, was done in the light of revelation though it was not revealed in the Quran as such. Pashawar, *Maqam-e-Qaym* (Rawalpindi: 2005), 62–3.
- 97 *Nasrullah* (Lahore), January 1956, 65; *Maqam-e-Qaym*, 104.
- 98 *Burgh* (Agr. stud.) 16, 64, and 1939: 60–6.
- 99 *Al-Hayat* (Amritsar) 4, 3 (May 1942): 56.
- 100 He did not hide his belief regarding Hadiths in quiet conversation in a written polemic with Zakar Ahmad Usmani that took place after the creation of Pakistan. He clearly stated that he found it outside the precincts of Hadith to be reaffirming Quran as the







- 133 Such a line of questions put forth by Sana'ullah demanded directions from the rest of the group of our members, who were unable to answer. *Adab-i-Hadith*, 22 October 1937: 8-9.
- 134 *Al-Hayar* (Amritsar), 7-1 (November 1945): 59-60.
- 135 *Tajfir*: li 140.
- 136 Sayyid Abul 'Abd Ma'dud, *Hadith aur Qur'an* (Karachi: 1954), 93.
- 137 This issue came under an air of significant importance even today and a number of scholars have taken issue with the report that the book was a mere translation of the text. The reference to distrust is as wrongly reported.
- 138 In the *Adab-i-Hadith*, 22 October 1937: 8-9. At the end of his treatise, Habib-ur-Rahman expressed his disappointment with the fact that the book had not been published in Urdu. He stated: 'The only reason for this is that the printer had no capacity as the owner of a printing press in Amritsar.'
- 139 *Adab-i-Hadith*, 22 October 1937: 8-9. Habib-ur-Rahman had earlier written a series of articles in the *Adab-i-Hadith* on the subject of the book. He wrote: 'The book was published in Urdu on 8-9 November-1 December 1929: 11-2.'
- 140 This is a copy of a manuscript which was found in the library of the author. It is a copy of the book 'Hadith aur Qur'an' by Habib-ur-Rahman, which was influenced by Orientalist conceptions of the East and reflecting cultural-moral values of the British. The book was published by the *Adab-i-Hadith* in 1937. The book was published in Urdu. (London, 2004), 267.
- 141 *Adab-i-Hadith*, 22 October 1937: 8-9. Habib-ur-Rahman had earlier written a series of articles in the *Adab-i-Hadith* on the subject of the book. He wrote: 'The book was published in Urdu on 8-9 November-1 December 1929: 11-2.'
- 142 Even Muhammad Husayn Arif, while commenting on the book noted this. In particular, he noted the author's passion for Islam. *De Ilam* (Lahore, repr. 2003), 28.
- 143 Ibid. 123. Later in his career Barq renounced his earlier stance on Hadith under the influence of the *Adab-i-Hadith*. He wrote: 'The book was published in Urdu on 8-9 November-1 December 1929: 11-2.'
- 144 In the *Adab-i-Hadith*, 22 October 1937: 8-9. Habib-ur-Rahman had earlier written a series of articles in the *Adab-i-Hadith* on the subject of the book. He wrote: 'The book was published in Urdu on 8-9 November-1 December 1929: 11-2.'
- 145 The building named Giza Bhawan had belonged to some Hindu organization before the partition of India. Interview with Dr Sakhi Sakhi Ullah, March 2006. Lahore.

# 6

## ‘God’s Kingdom on Earth’: Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, the Pakistani State, and the Politics of Islam, 1947–1969

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Ahl al-Qur’an groups and the Umma in their writings contributing to the discourse on Islamic reform had primarily been concerned with the idea of reforming the beliefs and practices of individual Muslims. The question of an ideal Islamic state did not take centre stage since the Muslims had already lost the political authority and it could not possibly have been revived. The case of an independent India established on principles of the rule of the majority in the 1940s, however, when the demand for an independent state for Muslims to be established on the basis of Islam gained momentum, the question of an Islamic state also came to be widely debated. Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, the most influential and prolific of the Ahl al-Qur’an-related intellectuals, significantly contributed to these debates. This chapter will provide a detailed account of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez’s view of Islam as an important Ahl al-Qur’an organization which assumed the role of a most representative organization upholding such ideas, especially after 1947. The focus will be on Parwez’s proposed line of reformative action for the nascent Muslim state and its system of laws which will be shown as having a bearing on the politics of Islam in Pakistan up to 1969. At a broader level, the chapter would also focus on the religious worldview of the dominant power elites governing the state during that period and the influence of the discourse of Islamic Modernism in the shaping of their ideals.

## 6.2. GHULAM AHMAD PARWEZ (1903-85): HIS LIFE AND WORKS

[illegible]

What makes it even more difficult is that the evidence is  
so much on the side of the "and" which is used in the "and/or"  
the popular description and theory. The evidence is so much  
among the "and" that it is so much the "and" that the  
evidence is achieved in a way that by the "and" it is possible to  
workings and even if one is not a professional in the field.

[illegible]

large number of Parwez's audio and video lectures—recorded at a time when such facilities were hardly available—have been digitally preserved and put online so that they can reach out to a wider audience. For the reasons that Parwez is the only Ahl al-Quran scholar who offers a detailed and convincingly argued alternative to almost every aspect of traditionally held beliefs (although not so much for practices) and that his printed works and lectures are readily accessible, makes him the most famous figure among the Ahl al-Quran whose influence has continued even after two decades of his death.<sup>10</sup>

### 6.3. GHULAM AHMAD PARWEZ'S RELIGIOUS THOUGHT: BACKGROUND

Parwez was born in a religious family of Batala in the Gurdaspur District of East Punjab and received religious education at home. His grandfather Maulw. Karam Baksh was a religious man deeply involved in mysticism. Under his influence and guidance, Parwez's religious ideas in this early period were strictly in conformity with the traditionally held beliefs of the vast majority of Sunni Muslims. Along with the religious education imparted to him at home, Parwez continued with his school education and went on to complete his graduation from the Punjab University in 1924. In 1927 he joined the Central Secretariat of the Government of India and later the Government of Pakistan and remained in service till 1955 when he took premature retirement in order to pursue his intellectual endeavours with full consideration.

The transformation of Parwez's religious ideas came about in the wake of his encounter with a 'controversial' thought. While the initial 'colliding impact' of the meaning of the Hadith left him a little shocked and not immediately dissatisfied, a radical revocation of religion altogether troubled and forced him into thinking of revision of the dogmas ingrained in his mind since childhood. Such ideas had been made to his religious worldview even before his entry into university life. It was after his arrival in Lahore and exposure to the stimulating intellectual and creative atmosphere of the pluralistic metropolis that Parwez started closer to developing his ideas further, in a search of free enquiry. What guided him most in his regard was the academically free company of great philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal. Parwez would frequent the intellectual gatherings at Iqbal's home and became an ardent admirer of Iqbal's poetry and other philosophical treatises. Parwez who was only a student at that time, would sit as a passive attendant of the discussions

am took place. The much trumpeted contacts of Iqbal and Parwez or pagated by the admittance of the latter is not corroborated by any reference from Iqbal's letters or other known details from his circle of private friends. But it cannot be denied, as analysis of Parwez's major works go late in the chapter would reveal, that Iqbal exercised a strong influence in the shaping of Parwez's religious, sociopolitical and economic ideas. Parwez wrote extensively on this during these ideological formative years along with presenting interpretative commentaries on Iqbal's Persian verses.

By the late 1920s Parwez had neither formally taken off his career as a scholar of Islam nor were his religious ideas too deviant from the traditional ones to catch attention. Before a change in his religious outlook became more visible Parwez came into contact with Aslam, a student from whom he borrowed several ideas on Hadith, Quranism and was also an early choice in his selection of Arabic language for his migration. It was in the year 1935 when Parwez stayed at Aslam Jafaripuri's residence in Delhi for a month to benefit from his ideas on Hadith and Quranism, especially an expertise in Arabic. In the same year, 1935, *Islam* started its publication as a monthly journal under the editorship of Nazim Yazdani, a close associate of Iqbal and a notable scholar of Islamic studies. The existence of *Islam* was claimed to be in fulfillment of the idea floated by Iqbal who had stressed the need for a journal which could promote the teachings of Quran among the Muslims and all readers and keep of Quran in its true rational and devotional spirit. The journal ceased publication less than a year following its period. The journal did not espouse controversial religious ideas. The journal was restarted in 1938 soon after the death of Muhammad Iqbal. At Aslam Jafaripuri's wish to be served by the journal during its second tenure was a forum for the writings of Muslims in Urdu assuming that since Parwez claimed to have pursued this task on the initiative of Muhammad Ali Jinnah himself in 1935, his purpose had been partially realized as the Pakistan movement gained momentum and various Urdu and English daily's cropped up in early forward Muslim Leagues line of argument on two nation theory. The publication of *Islam* for long was a mere disappointment until it was revived in 1948 and has continued since then.

In the early 1930s Parwez had started propagating his religious ideas through his written and spoken journals. His ideas have filtered in these writings his earlier regard for the Hadith and Sunnah and his reverence in his opinion to serve as benchmarks for the guidance of the Muslims in relation to Abdul Majid Mirzabek in 1932 Parwez had written,

Let us observe of Namaz, fasting, Hajj and Zakat we are following Ahadith then [it is because] these traditions (practices of our Holy Prophet) have reached us as a continuous practice. What is the position of these Ahadith? It is obvious that they have purely religious value and not a historical value as thought by the deniers of Ahadith."<sup>14</sup>

Parwez's Parwana, controversial ideas on Ahadith clouded his reputation, many of his writings were admired for their clarity of argument. One incident which brought Parwez to the spotlight of scholarly writings on Islam was the judgment delivered by a court in the princely state of Bahawalpur on the religious status of the Ahmadiyya community. A case had been filed in 1926 by a woman seeking divorce on the premise that her husband had become an apostate by becoming an Ahmadi. The court del. berated on this issue for many years and during the course of proceedings, several staunch stalwarts as Ayaz, Shuja, Kashmiri and Mughl Muhammad Shah. But in the final verdict delivered by the court in 1945, the judge ruled heavily on a charge won by Parwez in confirmation of the prophethood to a five-article conclusion that the Ahmadis were to be regarded as outside the pale of the Muslim community. Symbolising an appreciation of his writings on the Two-Nation Theory and a recognition of the Ahl-e-Kalam Ahl-e-Sunnat conception of religion can be gauged from the fact that conservative Deoband scholars like Yusuf Banuri and Zafar Ahmad Usmani relied on his arguments for their own purposes.

It was in the late 1930s and early 1940s that Parwez became a controversial figure not because of a challenge to his being a theist, but because of his influence on Islam, a religion with which he had been able to interact freely. He and his birth were growing in the same city and had fostered an academically rewarding interaction with each other in one of the earliest expressions – acceptance for the literature. Parwez mostly referred to the Quran, despite his notion of abiding by the *Markaz-e-Madani* central authorities of the Muslim community as equivalent to the obedience of God and the Prophet.<sup>15</sup> He limited the role of the Prophet to the interpretation of the Quran for his own age as the head of the then Muslim community and state. Subsequent to his death, the task was handed over to the hospitable Muslims who in consultation with the learned amongst the Muslims arrived at an understanding and interpretation of the Quranic injunctions for the issues of their times. Such an arrangement allowed for adaptation to the growth of Islamic law and jurisprudence as the *Markaz* had the authority to decide which of the





his avowed disavowal of both the reverence with the authority of the past in the form of Hadith—spiritualist findings and Quranic exegesis. He appropriated for himself the right to interpret and understand the Quran in the light of his own limited capabilities and to find the solution therein for the problems of his age. Secondly his conceptualization of Islam was that of a *Din* and not *Mazhab* or religion. The former is a more comprehensive term and encompasses the entire spectrum of society and individual lives including its social, economic, system, polity and code of law. These attributes of *Din* are in stark contrast to *Mazhab* which—as understood by Parwez and translated as religion—comprises of blind imitation of pseudo-Divine injunctions, superstitions, the exploitative forces of priest-hood and observance of spiritless rituals. *Din*, on the other hand:

gives full scope to man's initiative and creativity. It is meant to guide a fully developed person, a person who has the courage to think, judge and act for himself. *Din* offers broad principles which give guidance to man in the achievement of life and which enable him to attain the goal of self-realization and social welfare. These principles however are not meant to be followed blindly. They are to be applied with intelligence and forethought.<sup>14</sup>

In the pursuance of these intentions, Parwez was meticulously thorough in his approach. He did not simply offer a revised interpretation of Islam but a well-argued establishment of his credentials as a learned scholar in order for his works to exercise influence on his controlled audience of mostly college graduates and scholars with a non-specialized knowledge of Islam. This he did by expressing his knowledge on every aspect of Islamic history and Quranic exegesis. In the 1940s he simply focused on writing a multi-volume history of prophethood from Moses to Jesus and then Prophet Muhammad (peace) based on Biblical sources and Christian histories. He took years to finish a comprehensive lexicon of Quran dealing with the roots for every term used in the Quran. The principles and style for the usage of Arabic lexicography were employed by him in all his writings and were meant to serve as a guide for all those interested in developing an understanding of the Quran and Islam in their own. Another project of his which took a long years to finish was an indexing of the top of each surah in the Quran. A separate collection of the Quran was dictated by him during the last years of his life by most of his remains scattered in many of his audio and video lectures. Besides that there were individual monographs on Western philosophy, world religions, mysticism, Islamic socio-economic systems and so on. But al-

these works, in one way or the other, relied on the same basic works done by Parwez on the history and lexicography of the Quran.

Although Parwez's lexicography was not published till 1960, the *Qur'ān-i-karīm* (عظیم قرآن) by him in 1954 (which chapters and verses in modern terms) was put to use in his writings preceding the publication of the lexicon. An appraisal of Parwez's lexicographical service serves as the starting point and anchor in understanding his methodology for arriving at a different interpretation of the Quran and other aspects of Islamic beliefs and practices as well as institutions before him. Sayyid Ahmad Khan had adopted a similar strategy by coming up with his principles of *ijtihad* on the basis of which he ascribed new meanings to the generally understood words and verses of Quran under the banner of *the rational interpretation* (rational interpretation). The Quranic exegeses of Maabul Ashraf Chakrabarti and Khwaja Ahmad ad Din Amirani have been similarly titled as *Quranic Mission* and *Practical sources* to allow for restructuring of Quranic meanings in ways hitherto unknown in the Islamic literature on Quran spanning over centuries. These commentaries of Quran and their views have a similar intent of re-creating the nation's superstitious events in Quran with rational basis. Had been it possible for a more rational scholar of Arabic among the Ulema as superficial and lacking in basic knowledge of the Urdu and the language Parwez sought to put this act as a responsibility on his credentials for extensive grammatical and even detailed knowledge of the Quranic language. He had to be seen in order to avoid the general criticism that the Arabic Quranic word used merely as a Quranic source. Thus the lexicon was a central yet periphery of Parwez's Quranic literature and served as a principle for Quranic exegesis but also as a veritable limit to his competence in Arabic language. It does not imply that Parwez was aware of the non-acceptability of his lexical findings and backlash from the Ulema for his position is clear between his own expectations and the general acceptance. For Parwez's concern was to engage the sophisticated or a targeted Muslim readership about his expertise in Arabic rather than convince the Ulema of his genuine scholarship.

For this purpose Parwez spread all his findings with some verifiable evidence from other works of Arabic lexicography. Like his approach to the other literary works of the past, Quranic exegesis was the stage of the classical Arabic literature. It is because, in his opinion, these works had been compiled mostly during the Abbasid period – a time when the Arabic language had undergone a considerable transformation under Persian

influence in terms of culture, philosophy and other forms of knowledge was clouding the reason and spirit of the Qur'anic message.<sup>30</sup> In order to determine the meanings of a word as understood by Arabs in the days of the prophet, Parwez like Hamid-ud-Din Farahi and in appreciation of his works, relied on pre-Islamic Arabic poetry for its usage in the Qur'anic text. Parwez looked into the root of a particular word and its various attributes. In this regard he was guided by the peculiar context in which the word had been employed in the text to determine whether the meaning intended was literal or metaphorical. Or, for that purpose, he traced how the same word had been used at a different place in Quran. An application of these principles is best exemplified in his interpretation of terms supposedly denigrating to the status of women. The term *qawwam* in the Qur'anic verse 4:34 has been explained and translated by the exegetes as 'master' or 'rule'. According to Parwez, *qawwam* did not so much up with a woman (as it arrived at this meaning at a time when the pre-Islam had been overshadowed by Persian Islam) and under the influence of repression and oppressions. The women had been degraded in the pre-Islamic sub-human status in violation of the rights originally accorded to them by Islam. In his lexicon, on the other hand, Parwez traced the word *qawwam* from the root *qaww* which he translated as meaning 'striking a balance'. A perusal of the Arabic language and subsequent words derived from the root were to possess similar meanings. He thus raised the question suggested by Parwez was that of a partner as it was purported to more in tune with the meaning of the root. The word added to.<sup>31</sup> Such an application of exegetical and textual principles runs through the whole corpus of Parwez's writings.

#### 6.4 FROM INDIVIDUAL SELF TO COLLECTIVE EXISTENCE

As already discussed, Parwez not only theorized the establishment of a fully Islamic state for the revitalization of spiritual uplift and material progress of the Muslims but also emphasized the role of the individual in this enterprise. He had *qaww* with its rational faculties and instinctive inclination for freedom and justice as the driving force of the Islamic Muslim world community that Parwez seeks to construct. Without impressing upon the literary aspects of Qur'anic teachings, Parwez could not imagine the blossoming or even canalization of the talents and the harnessing of creative energies for the benefit of Muslim community at large or the workings of an Islamic state. Parwez appeared to be cognizant of the apprehension that if the individual is to be freed from independent



of others. The Divine alternative has been explained by the Quran in metaphorical narrative of the story of Adam. Adam in the story does refer to any single individual but the whole of humanity.<sup>21</sup> In the light of Parwez's technique technique, Paradise is not a spatial abode of blissfulness but refers to a existing state of abundance during a primordial stage of evolution of mankind while the root for the word Adam refers to an ability to create. The co-existence of Adam on the Paradise was in conformity with the Divine rubric for collective ownership as he means for securing provisions for the growth of Human Self. This idyllic existence came to an abrupt halt as Adam was lured in the trap of individualism. It was the arising of this forbidden fruit, a mutual appropriation of factors of production that resulted in division among mankind, the arising of a new social dimension, mutual rivalry and competition for material resources.<sup>22</sup> One can not deny that it is a own rational choice in violation of the Divine rubric that was inevitable for him to be unable to look at the larger picture of the benefits accruing from collective existence. It was simultaneously accompanied with a desire for maximization of material resources in a bid for the preservation of self.

Thus a directly ordered system of socio-economic nurturing (*Nizam-i-Rahmat*) is replaced by the growth of the human self by the way of providing means and means for this purpose. This is in stark contrast to a materialist view of life which is governed by atomism as a result of the exclusion of social state of society by individualism and private enterprise by inequity in the accumulation of wealth and by the hardening of class structure. Self-defeating nationalism and Machiavellian statecraft are its social and organizational reflections.<sup>23</sup>

The *Nizam-i-Rahmat*, on the other hand, strikes at the very roots of an unjust and class ridden equation of haves and have-nots based on having in possession of private property and ownership of factors of production. All the material resources are to be kept up to and for all and are to be managed according to Divine principles of social justice and economic equity to provide for its members the means of subsistence. The securing of man's physical needs is not an end in itself but only the means of seeing the mind free to indulge in higher pursuits of self development. The

Divine order is any like a joint business venture in which the capital investment is made by God (in the form of natural factors of production) and Man's contribution is only the labour that he puts in that enterprise. So he can claim only a share of the land's produce which he has sowed for and has handed over the rest to God to be devote for the benefit of the

justice. He cannot want dividend from the value of capital because it is God's creation for the benefit of mankind through the Order of *Rahmatullah* and not for any individual's possession and material benefit. That makes any form of earnings on capital, whether commercial interest, equity, partnership and land, *riba* (to be considered as *Riba* (usury or interest)).<sup>14</sup>

The system according to Faruqi bears only superficial resemblance with communism and it cannot be claimed that the Marxist principles have simply been interpolated on to the Islamic view of social justice and economic equity. The Islamic system as outlined by him has earned its respect not from the past under Prophet Muhammad (peace) and the rightly guided caliphs. If there is any borrowing of ideas involved then Communism must be considered as being at the wrong end as opposed to Islam. But a far more serious question is whether the Order had left the Communists with any room for a quality more than the Capitalist market. The main external inspiration of the *Naama Rahbariyat* was an acceptance of the supremacy of the Islamic and the repugnance to Communism. The result was that Communism was rejected as a materialist application of the Capitalist system and not shown to be the embodiment of a society based on such twisted non-material notions of humanity as a might have been. It was when Said Maksud al-Hilali did not foresee that while a great reputation had to be shared it had to be followed with some positive demonstration of larger universal values of good. By making a generalisation his philosophy was not responsible for Marx to offer a philosophical basis for the recognition of universal and eternal values of humanity and virtues and thus to question why should one help the poor and the needy in case of *Naama Rahbariyat* for the provision was for the appropriate resource and not efficient utilization on behalf of the state. He was concerned about the benefits for the state and not at the service of the state. When (and himself) had criticised this notion of materialism and while the taking care of the state was the main objective, it was not as if it was where the fundamental difference between Communism and *Naama Rahbariyat* lay. In the same way, although it is his aim, he says that the resulting system shall be mutually shared to the benefit and extension. He agrees that further progression of Islam and is linked to other universal values of society and that they can only attain to higher stages of human society if we work with rationality in a collective manner. To claim that Islam is the impossibility of materialistic arguments is the establishment of any set of moral ethics as a mutually virtuous society.

it to the oppressive state apparatus to coerce the individual to labour for the state. So, in a nutshell, it may be summarized as

in the *Rabubiyah* society man sells his life to God and in the Communist state he sells his mind to the state.<sup>18</sup>

This argument, hence, implies that a Divine world system has more scope for independent reasoning than all the man-made alternatives which claim to be based purely on human reason and unbridled rationality.

### 6.5. THE ISLAMIC STATE AND ITS DYNAMISM

Parwez proposed Islamic Order of socio-economic nature was deemed by him as imperative for finishing every member of the community with propitious opportunities for self-expression and self-development.<sup>19</sup> The establishment and successful working of *Nizam-i-Rabubiyat* necessarily required providing answers to questions about the historical creation of any such system being in place at any time during Muslim history and the possibility of its re-establishment in the Muslim world. Parwez's response to such queries helps clarify his views on the Prophet and the Islamic state.

Contrary to any historical evidence, Parwez insisted that the Divine Order for the socio-economic nurturing of the Muslim community was put into practice during the lifetime of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and perfected upon during the reign of Caliph Umar.<sup>20</sup> For the reason that the Prophet was able to erect a Divine Order by counteracting the exploitative forces of the affluent classes and the priesthood, it was to be inferred that neither was the divine suggested system impractical, nor was the Prophet a passive onlooker when it came to giving practical shape to Divine reforms. It was the act of a nation of all such Divine ideas which proved that the Prophet was not just a postman who delivered the message of God but an extraordinary man, a human being who overcame all the odds in setting an unimpeachable precedent of a successful implementation of these Orders.<sup>21</sup> This was Parwez's rationale for accordng the highest status to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as the ideal of humanity because he, despite being a commoner about an extraordinary one, transformed a whole community at large in perfect accordance with the Divine Knowledge received by him. Recognition of such an accomplishment of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was meant to by Parwez to counteract the general impression that he had scant regard the Prophet's character and



achievements. But it obviously fit considerably short as far as the realisations of the proponents of *fiqh* went. The reason for this was that although the term *Fiqh* precedes *Islam*, a *fiqh* meant that the all human centre of the *fiqh* should be an inspiration for other human beings in the struggle for the establishment of a *world* *umma* on earth, and the methodology adopted by the *fiqh* is to be a *fiqh* should be suitably confirmed by *fiqh* but should not be a *fiqh* in a *fiqh*. *Fiqh* did not think his relegating the *fiqh* to the status of largely an inspirational figure and confining his role as only methodologically relevant to the *fiqh* of the *fiqh* objectives to be a *fiqh* and its society amounted to mistaking his relevance for the *fiqh*.

According to the explanation of such notions seen in the Prophet's words recorded in the form of the *Qur'ān*, it is evident that parallel usage of Divine guidance which can be extended to the Prophet's Muslims of all the ages and creation of the *Qur'ān* is a *Qur'ān* of the saved savings hence assumes a secondary importance in the argument. The cause recorded in the *Qur'ān* is not all the savings of a way and usage of them as one entity. The new *Qur'ān* therefore did not appear to be a *Qur'ān* for Parwez did not serve any significant purpose. For him the *Qur'ān* is not written as a *Qur'ān* but most at there is Divine guidance. Not only was the *Qur'ān* to be regarded as a *Qur'ān* and revealed knowledge but all *Qur'ān* is the *Qur'ān* so that when this knowledge was revealed to the Prophet, Parwez did not allow scope even for translation or for that of *Qur'ān* form. It is a *Qur'ān* as it is that *Qur'ān* made. However, in his discussion with a *Qur'ān* scholar on this issue, Parwez failed to come up with a satisfactory explanation and in some instances in which the Prophet appeared to have acted on a source other than *Qur'ān* itself, for example, Parwez was particularly loath that as to how was it that the Prophet uttered the *Qur'ān* in such a way passages of the *Qur'ān*, Parwez tried to say that was written in the form of a communication sent to Muhammad, then a time when the text itself was being revealed through the intermediaries (e.g. *Angels*) and in which the Prophet was guided how a particular verse was to be placed in the *Qur'ān* text. By placement of an explanatory passage is assumed that in the text fulfilled the purpose of communication and it was to be recorded and to become part of the *Qur'ān* text. This process was further by Parwez in the creating of a *Qur'ān* as a *Qur'ān* with instructions about the punctuations in the *Qur'ān* text. But instructions to be necessary to the text. The inaccessibility of *Qur'ān* has a symbol back the question of validation of the *Qur'ān* conservances. Parwez

Like his mentor Anwar Javāni, part did endorse the prevalent ritual practice but, unlike Jāfar Shāh Muḥawwī, he did not cite a divine sanction or the composition to allow for their continuous independence.

In Parwez's proposed alternative for resolving the ensuing contradiction the solution was to prevent the validation of these practices to a state of caliphate performed on the precedent set by the Prophet (*Akhḥar al-Akhar al-Akhar*). Thus *Akhḥar* was to provide the political and executive framework for the establishment and successful work up of Divine commandments of the Muslim community and programs to review the Islamic laws and practices. Its authority to do so was to be derived from the Quran itself and the precedents set by the Prophet and his successive Rightly Guided Caliphs (Abū Bakr, Umar, Uṣayn A.) in the running of state religious and other affairs.

With regard to religious practices it was clear to Parwez that Quran had not given any details about various ritual observances. A stance to the contrary taken by the likes of Maḥmūd Abūl-Kāsim was found by Parwez as seriously erroneous and he condemned it as damaging to the cause of dissemination of Quranic teachings. But in the same time Parwez had also found Hadith literature to be less helpful in determining a universal format for Islamic prayers. He argued that had Hadith not been widely and widely of guidance, he would not have been so torn in matters of details among different sects with each one of them citing Ahadith in defence of their preferred mode of worship and demanding that at the end the one being in accordance with the practice of the Prophet.<sup>14</sup> The only possible solution to this schism, in Parwez's opinion, was the revival of *Akhḥar al-Akhar al-Akhar*. It was here, he argued, that worship details and ritual practices were established among the Muslims in the first place. The Prophet had acted as the political, administrative and judicial head of the Islamic state. In the execution of these duties he was not guided by any Divine source and had to rely on his *unfettered reason* and *amal fa'i* (yes). He variously consulted his companions for a variety of issues and this was how Quranic injunctions were inferred and interpreted. He and *Ṭayyib al-Aḥl al-ḥamīyah* and *Ṭayyib al-Aḥl al-ḥamīyah* were accepted of the shaping and successful working of various socio-economic and political institutions and policies in accordance with the dictates of the Quran. In adhering to the message of the Quran and acting as a guide to the Prophet and decisions given by him in accordance with the consultations and advice of his companions—no individual was obeying a divine commandment. Such an argument could not stand during the tenure of just four Caliphs of Islam.

with the only difference that the Prophet had been replaced by a Caliph although the powers of the latter, as they were being applied within the above mentioned methodological framework, were not different from that of the Prophet as the head of the state. As long as the *Marhaz-i A'la* (central authority of Muslim community) was patterned on the precedent set by the Prophet as governing a community committed to obeying it.<sup>45</sup> The problem arose when the *Shi'ite* *Ulama's* perceived wrong hands and the spectre of dictatorialism entered into the horizon. The appropriation of power by these non-representative dictators severed the link between state and religious authority. Despotism, therefore, threatened to impose its will upon the Muslim community and aspects of Quranic interpretation or even respect in matters of religious guidance. With the *Marhaz-i A'la* in disarray, the people resorted to individual scholars for answers to their queries. This was how the duality between state and religion arose in Islam. It had far reaching effects insofar as Islam became a religion like many others in the world and not a reality as an *encompassing One*. The state affairs were bifurcated and the distinct domains of spiritual and temporal. Hence, there emerged in Islam a presently unresolvable dualism wherein untrained members of the Muslim community as every single scholar individually assumed the responsibility of interpreting the Quran, Islamic law and religious practices. As the state was excluded from undertaking his task, there was no viable authority that could arbitrate between varying interpretations offered by the *Ulama*. The vacuum was filled by Hadith collections as *Ulama* increasingly came to an undue standing that as an authority verified statements of the Prophet was the most important source for determining the precepts of Islamic beliefs and practices. The jurisprudential *fatwas* thus offered, at best, as viable as codified law and have continued to be so since then.<sup>46</sup>

It was an injustice on the part of the *Ulama* for centuries to blindly imitate these jurisprudential findings. Bayhaqi was found more respectable. His objections were based on his opinion that the mechanism adopted by the nation for establishing Islamic law was faulty. He admitted that although they all worked in good faith and under the supervision of their superiors, *Ulama* and others, in his opinion, no single individual had the authority to impose his scholarly findings as accurate and binding on others. These findings were even more justified as far as law was concerned as they were based on the principle that the Prophet offered the best mode of action and was the sole divinely inspired guide in matters of Quranic interpretation and articles of faith and

practice. Contrary to that, Parwez proposed that the *Markaz-i-Millat* was not necessarily dependent on the Prophet or a learned jurist or exegete or a representative assemblage of Muslim community and its scholars which had the right to progressively interpret Quranic injunctions, among various postulates of Islamic laws and suitably determine the mode of ritual observances.

Although Parwez acknowledged *Markaz-i-Millat* right to propose changes in the mode of ritual observances, he maintained that there was more scope for *Markaz-i-Millat* to use its extensive powers of revision in matters relating to different aspects of law and not for the alteration of the established ritualistic practices as such. It was because while a reformist or a change provided relief to a situation of law and ritualistic fetters, the same did not do so in the well-governed Muslims. Regardless of the temporal and spatial settings, ritualistic modes can remain their relevance. But at the same time, Parwez maintained that the prevalent schisms among the Muslims on the petty details of rituals was so detrimental for the realization of the larger aim of unity amid Muslim ranks that the *Markaz-i-Millat* would have to apply its authority concerning about uniformity among the Ummah and put an end to sectarian schisms.<sup>17</sup> At the time, that such a *Markaz-i-Millat* remained at a conservative posture, it owed for the continuation of its established practices and did not condone many changes in it for the want of averting to the divisions among the Muslims and needless religious controversies.

By proposing such an idea, Parwez purportedly disallowed the applicability of *Markaz-i-Millat*'s powers for a Quranic law-like radical alteration of prevalent practices but he himself did not totally desist from doing the same – at least with regard to the theoretical aspects of these practices. This can be seen in Parwez's differentiated understanding of the Quranic term *Salat*. He defined *Salat* as the obedience of Divine dictates and its components in every field and aspect of life. In a similar vein, he described *Uqubat-i-Salat* (normally understood as 'establishing the prayers') as establishment of such a system or society in which the individuals were enabled to perform *Salat*. As such *Uqubat-i-Salat* was to be a continuous process pertaining to all the domains of individual and collective life. However, Parwez did admit that the Quran had also mentioned *Salat* in the sense it was normally understood.<sup>18</sup> This was when the Quran asked the believers to 'Stand' but it was just one subsidiary component of the whole *Salat* system and was meant to give voice to man's inner feelings and cater for the emotional component of his Self. The provision for such gatherings did not imply an endorsement of

Islam rituals beside the in spiritless worship that was meant to further strengthen Mana resolve and commitment to *Isma'ah*.<sup>51</sup> So even though Parwer was not proposing changes in the formal or ritually relevant aspects of *Isma'ah*, he was adding a spiritual new meaning to it as well as a concept which had direct bearing on its practice as well.

Other than *Isma'ah* Parwer's arrangements in the new Muslim practices were not merely technical but were quite a radical break from the past in ritual details as well. This is best seen in his description of the Hajj. He followed the line exactly similar to that of Al-Wafa' and the *Ummah* without a known change. He described the Hajj as a modern-day equivalent of United Nations in which Muslims represent from over the world assemble to discuss differences. The Hajj schedule specified by Parwer is underlain by the starting course of humankind in which the people are physically and *spiritually* stressed by continuous external pressure and challenges in the protection of their successful working of the Islamic system. He wrote: "In the occasion of Hajj—a tribute from a commemoration of Qur'anic revolution—delegates are chosen for representing the Nation during the Hajj proceedings. The inaugural session of Hajj takes place in a large open area known as *Arafat* where delegates are introduced to one another. At the same session, a report is submitted on last year's performances and progress are discussed to set the agenda. It is followed by three days of consultations. During this period, laws are framed and pitfalls are pointed out to set the cordiality between the delegates with the purpose of not overburdening the Nation; the delegates are expected to make personal sacrifices in a range for the Nation. Parwer was not different in the ritual aspects of Hajj either. As in the past, *Isma'ah* also opined that Islam has inherent in it the message of peace, love and unity and was similarly a pillar of the Nation for emotional purifying of its followers. It was with certain ideas had been revealed by the Holy Qur'an once. Therefore, it is with a new spirit that the message of a message should be clear to all the people of the world and a resolve to establish peace and unity in the whole world. In a consultation of the Hajj is a reiteration of the resolve that Lord Allah is the final pointer. Man's life is a great effort but it is directed towards following His Commandments."<sup>52</sup>

Hence, it can be inferred from Parwer's writings that if prayers were to be performed in ritual observances and especially in speaking, we could implement with a confidence from the whole of Muslim

community, no bar could be put on it since the rituals established by the Prophet were not divinely ordained and were only adopted after mutual consultations. This implied that Parwez wanted the prevalent practices to be kept largely intact not because they had a Divine sanction behind them but because he realized the impossibility of the Muslims being convinced of agreeing to any alternative form of ritual observances even after the revival of a *Markaz-i-Millet*.

In Parwez's conceptualization of Islam, the Din of Islam which encompassed a wide range of beliefs and activities did not entail anything that was essentially and completely immutable nor was a fixation with the Janad paradigm possible in the presence of a revived *Markaz-i-Millet* or *Khatwat ul-Minhaj al-Nabuwawiyat*. There were, however, certain 'Permanent values' – moral & ethical-moral exhortations – and edicts clearly and most unambiguously stated in the Quran to which Parwez emphasized strict adherence. The proposed regulations, interpretations and amendments were proposed by him to take place within the contours specified by these permanent values. So while he himself included – in addition to the Quran – Hadith as a source of the permanent values and major repository of supposedly unchangeable aspects of laws, beliefs and practices, Parwez insisted himself on accepting the authority of the Quran alone in dictating the permanent aspects of Islam and that too in terms of the values or principles it enjoined, and rarely in forms less unconstrained. Thus Parwez's theory of state and his concepts about its legislative power and executive functions, entailed:

1. God alone is to be obeyed and not any human being. Even a Prophet cannot make anyone obey him.
2. The obedience to God is to be in accordance with set of rules codified in the Quran.
3. This obedience takes place within the parameters of a system (and not individuals) whose first central authority is the figure of the Prophet. Obedience to this central authority is called the obedience of God and the Prophet. This is what the rule of God is.
4. Those regulations (which even at note details have been specified by the Quran, cannot be amended by this central authority either. But those constitutional provisions which in the Quran are touched upon in principle only, has been purposely done that so as to make them amenable for change in matters of detail in accordance with the dictates of the circumstances.

5. The Caliph, at the Prophet's apex, the Prophet's Caliph, is hence the divinely-ordained God's Prophet, in capacity, through obeying his authority of this new central authority.<sup>4</sup>

It was the establishment of an Islamic state in accordance with the above mentioned principles that occupied a central position in the overall scheme envisaged by Ghulam Ahmad. Parties to the revival of Muslim dominance in spheres of intellectual, social, economic growth, socio-economic justice and internal welfare, and as the means of putting an end to international differences among Muslims. His proposed theoretical framework envisaged extensive powers to the *Markazi Millat* so that it could become a state or super-state for both the Muslims and the non-Muslims, to ensure justice to all individuals and the community. The *Markazi Millat*, among other tasks, was entrusted with the responsibility of establishing the Islamic State of social, economic justice by appropriating all the factors of production, control, distribution in accordance to the demands of changing times and bring about uniformity in Islamic observances of all Muslims. However, the empowerment of such a wide range of powers involved responsibilities and accountability, whose absence would be a spiritual disaster. God did not intend an Islamic Levantine state of affairs, it was because the desire of such a state was instilled by Satan to corrupt the functions assigned to it in a continuously progressive way and on the basis of Islamic values. It was even through Parties to the Islamic revival, he says, and the individual under multiple wraps of various states, in a social complex it was to the contrary. The state is actually required to exist in harmony and assigned functions. Parties to the Islamic revival, he says, require a permanent Islamic principles take the form of a state in which the Islamic values are maintained but his appreciation of the principles of an Islamic Levantine was Parties to the Islamic revival, he says, and the Islamic revival for the Islamic revival in the name of Allah and his religion, in Islam and hence, he explains, an Islamic state of the Islamic state as well, thus even by appointing a religious authority to the state and the Islamic revival, the presence of Islamic guidance. Parties to the Islamic revival to carry out the Islamic revival and autonomous human action.

Parties to the Islamic revival, he says, a Muslim-based system of state was a result in response to the discussion on an independent state for the Muslims under during the late 19th and early 20th century period. Parties to the Islamic revival, he says, the Islamic revival of the Islamic revival.

saw in the establishment of an independent Muslim state the possibility of actualization of his own ideas regarding an Islamic state. After the creation of Pakistan, Parwez wrote even more extensively on Islamic state and the role expected of the new rulers regarding the implementation of an Islamic system in Pakistan in the following sections of the chapter. A detailed variation has been made in the print is added and the ideas held by the price-makers at Pakistan during the years from 1947 to 1965. This period has been chosen for its distinctive similarity from the post-1965 decades of Pakistani politics in matters of politics relating to Islam. It was during this period when Parwez most actively pursued the cause of disseminating his own ideas by publishing a prolific amount of literature and through establishing scholarly credentials among a select class, mostly comprising of the young college graduates, professionals and others with a similar moderate non-traditional understanding of Islam. Parwez was also working for the recognition of his use of the *Juz' al-Ulum al-Islamiyyah* by the power elites as the only one among the scholars of Islam who wielded ideas that could usefully be employed for the establishment of an Islamic state along progressive lines. He was particularly successful in his endeavor towards endorsement of his personal status as an organizational giant. Some of his ideas in this regard had already been taken up by like-minded scholars among his predecessors and contemporaries whose writings had shaped the religious worldview of the accepted college graduates. Western educated Muslim middle class, professional classes and power elites were attracted to this doctrine relating to Islam in Pakistan up to 1965. This included most importantly recognition of the *Ulama* as the *pre-eminence* of Islam and *maintainance* of the detailed aspects so as to allow for dynamism in amendment of laws and field communities. A necessary corollary to disregard for the widespread orientation of the yearteryear scholars was the inadmissibility of *Ulama's* role in the functioning of the state and especially in the law-making process concerning a revisioning of different aspects of Islamic laws so as to forestall the dangers of Pakistan becoming a democracy. This was in sharp contrast to the religious worldview of the *Ulama* who upheld the belief that legislation with regard to every aspect of life had already been received in the Quran and Sunnah. Even if there was to be a scope for any fresh legislation it was expected by them that the whole process be subordinated to their overarching influence. The curtailment of such powers idealized by the *Ulama* was to be at the expense of an enlarged legislative authority for those running the state. In doing so the power elite of Pakistan was perhaps knowingly being opposed by



particular aspect of Akl al-Quran thought—the severance from the textual and religious authority of the past. It is dissociation from the past a lowered envisioning of a state with an avowed regard for Islamic values and its acceptance as the guiding principles for the sociological outlook of the state but exclusion at the same time, of the Ulama from playing a role in the working of the state.

The following sections of the chapter would show how these ideas acquired from Parwez and other individuals—albeit in considerably modified forms and with different purposes—were found favourable to the working of the new state and hence developed through various organizational setups and institutional means supported by the power elites.

## 6.6. POLITICS OF ISLAM IN PAKISTANI DEBATES ON THEORETICAL ASPECTS DURING THE PERIOD 1947-1969

The debate about the role of Islam and its applicability in the governing of the state and regulating the affairs of the society pre-dates the creation of Pakistan. The slogan of Islam had been used to rally the support of the Muslims for the creation of a new independent state which could serve the economic and religious interests of the Muslims of South Asia. The ideological outlines of the proposed state, however, were obscure. The leaders of the Muslim League—especially Muhammad Ali Jinnah who spearheaded the Pakistan Movement—were bred in British parliamentary tradition and had little to contribute to the idea of an Islamic state. Most of the basic assumptions were drawn from the central bureaucracy and did not have an interest in or experience of mass politics. It was one of the reasons why most of the Ulama kept themselves aloof from the Muslim League's campaign for Pakistan. Such stalwarts as Abul Kalam Azad and Feroz Ahmad Mazhar—the latter being the head of the Indian Muslim Sena Party at Deoband—were in the line of Congress efforts against the British rule and did not give much importance to the status and ending of the Muslim League. With such variations, some heads of the other independentists such as Allama Iqbal, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, Shabbir Ahmad, and Inayatullah Masruri, it was felt that the creation of a state comprising of Muslim-majority areas would be a pyrrhic achievement at the expense of Muslims of the United Provinces and would effectively dilute the significance and influence in those areas which were once the bastions of Muslim political and cultural authority in North India. While the likes of Maududi and Mashreqi did not shun the idea of converting

reaching into the interior of Pakistan by the means of a pamphlet spread by the spread cadres of the respective religious-political organizations. Azad and Madani did not find fault with the concept of composite nationalism as repugnant to Islam; at the same time, they were sure of the safety of Muslim rights from political and religiously an independent India with a substantial Hindu majority and a significant Muslim minority. These views of dissent usually agreed with the notion of Nationalism, and it was only Muslim League claims of setting up an Islamic state as its leaders were accused of being not observant of basic Islamic norms and practices and lacking in sufficient knowledge of Islam. It was also stated that the Muslim League overcome this deficiency with the help of Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, another influential Deobandi cleric who broke links with his fellow Qadianis to launch a separate political platform in support of Muslim League's efforts for the creation of a new state.

In other post-colonial Muslim-majority states, too, Islam had played a significant role in legitimizing political and cultural hegemony of the post-independence national movements. These states were considerably in awe of Indonesia and Egypt. But in both new countries Islam was not the basis for a distinct nationhood. In case of Indonesia, Islam had been the only hereditary institution before the advent of the state, and it was a common ethnic and religious identity that had united the archipelago and so reinforced the idea of a common identity encompassing the Muslim nation's regions. So the East Asia Team entrusted with the task of drafting an ideological basis for the new state had already reached a compromise by acknowledging the existence of religious but not Islamic lines.<sup>56</sup> In doing so they rejected the demands of Muslim-majority Indonesia for a mono-religious and mono-cultural role for Islam in the constitution. Failing to achieve this goal, a militant struggle followed in which Muslims after the independence of Indonesia fought to establish a theocratic state, while the army—the power of the state, especially the military—sought the national unity of the country was imperilled by accommodating Islam within the state structure. Similarly, in Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood had played a considerable part in fighting against the Free Officers to overthrow a monarch and bring Egypt from a parasitic viceroy of Britain to a free country. It was essentially the Muslim Brotherhood that had come out in force against the rule of the British and against the radical religious orientations. In order to rein in such tendencies, there was a massive crackdown against the members of the Brotherhood. At the same time, the new regime moved to bring religious establishment under its con-

This was exemplified in such measures as mandating of languages by the Azhar (religious endowments) department, pulpit of single Friday sermons for all the mosques, and curtailing of A. Azhar's curriculum by adding to it new faculties for the study of Western sciences. However, Islam continued to determine the personal law of the Muslim subjects.<sup>1</sup> Hence, in both cases, Islam's potential as a legitimizing and inspiring force for certain socio-political goals was realized and applied by the power elites but they remained avowedly secular in their policy decisions and were not averse to pronouncing them in public either.

The case of Pakistan, however, is unique. Not only has Islam been the most important factor in defining the support of the Islamists in the establishment of a separate state, it was also the only binding factor in uniting factions in the newly formed nation. And in its legal state set apart by a distance of more than 200 miles of water and hence, time, the new Pakistan was conceived as a Muslim state catering to the religious faith of the Muslims, can at best be regarded as an academic overstatement of the events leading to the creation of Pakistan but not an exact reading. The only opinion available to answer the question therefore, during this period of Pakistan's history, was not about the acknowledgment of the role of Islam in Pakistan but the need for Islam to be established and the extent of its influence on the working of the state. This question can be best suitably shared along the boundaries of states' secular state and divine state and thus in state (divine state) and non-state (the role of Islam in Pakistan) during this period. A sacred state, including human will, generally referred to as a theocratic state, concerning Islam as a sacred state of religion as an Islamic state, and ruled by various Islamic groups and political parties was the only option for would have formulated the authors of the constitution, the working of the state. However, the idea of a secular state was associated with a type of secular regime espousing regional, nationalism or social ideologies, as it was to be found in some Arab countries—feasible for Pakistan on the account of its most parties of Islamists in Pakistan and the aversion of Pakistan power elites, powered from a secular, narrow and Arabist Islamic ideology. Islam was simple, oriented and promoted by the Islamic power elites. The state at least in state was a interface between the religion and the state and a uniting human will and secular state, administering sacred will. This regard the religious work of the Islamic state, however, the Islamic state, the Islamic judges and the military officers, who were relegated to an entity named as the Pakistani establishment, was shaped by the doctrine of Islamic

Modernism which has been developing in South Asian Islam and elsewhere since the late nineteenth century. Such an understanding of Islam allowed the envisioning of a state in which—at least theoretically—democracy, rights of minorities, sovereignty of the parliament and flexibility of Islamic laws could be propagated as the guiding principles of the state. Hence the shaping of state by the power elites in line with the discourse of Islamic Modernism was not only a self-interest-vested interests of precluding the Ulama from the state since it had pre-empting Paktia from being run on a reflex tradition of Islam and forging an Asian-based national identity to subdue the centrifugal pull of ethnic and nationalisms, but a so far actualizing their own religious ideas. Theoretically it has been hypothesized in this chapter that the power elites in Pakistan were predominantly neither as widely secularists nor did they think that a state partitioned by their parties was going to be a purely secular state. It was not insignificant then that the newly born capital of Pakistan was named as 'Islamabad'.

It has also been argued in this part of the chapter that the power elites were in favour of an *ideal* Islamic state. As Wilfred Cantwell Smith remarked in the context of Pakistan that 'an *actual* Islamic state is a state that its Muslim people are trying to make *ideally* Islamic. *An ideal Islamic state exists that its Muslims consider to be good*'. As it is the power elites were concerned, they were moulding Pakistan into an *ideal* Islamic state. It is just that the ideal was inspired by Islamic Modernism which allowed considerable space for such notions as relative secularity of the state, deviation from Islamic laws and legislative authority of the Parliament among many other things. In doing so they were never completely successful and were partially demoralized. On many occasions they had to go against their own preferences by yielding to the pressure tactics of the state's radical policies that could convince the population if at the state was really *ideally* Islamic. Taking into consideration these factors, the history of Pakistan cannot be periodized between an unrestrained pendulum swinging steadily in favour of secularism and later towards Islamization. Rather, the history of Islam's role in the Pakistani state during this period should be accounted under the term politics of Islam which has considerable flexibility to incorporate with its ambivalence such issues as dispute over representation, contrasting religious traditions, sectional interests and ideological worldviews of key actors and the imperatives of populist decision making. It is the interplay of such variables and their relative strengths and weaknesses during a life-time of

social, political, economic, and even geostrategic compulsions that have influenced the varying degrees of Islam's role in the state of Pakistan.

In order to substantiate these hypotheses and understand the facets

of debate on Islam in Pakistan and the politics of Islam that followed the creation of Pakistan, it is important to describe the category of Pakistani power elites in detail and connect their ideological anxieties with the discourse of Islamic modernism. The aim part of the chapter would highlight those policy statements, legislative measures, judicial decisions and constitutional measures which shape the way it is seen that there was a concerted effort on the part of the Pakistani power elites to shape the nascent state in accordance with their religious worldviews.

## 6.7. PAKISTANI POWER ELITES AND THEIR VISION OF ISLAMIC MODERNISM

A detailed study of the Pakistan Establishment, especially for the period formed only following the creation of Pakistan, is lacking. It has been taken for granted that Pakistan's socio-economic has been under the domination of a select clique of big land owners, senior military and political leaders and major industrial houses. While the political observers are correct in their reading of the erstwhile structure of Pakistan, there remains the need for a study that takes a view of those at the helm of the state in order to develop a better understanding of the complexities and processes involved in determining the course of state policy towards different issues. Instead of such a comprehensive study, only a few general interpretations have been offered. For example, Hasid B. Naveed has simply defined the power elites as a collective of "araks in a oligarchical and middle class professional or petty bourgeoisie of servants of the landed capitalists and big landowners" (p. xiv).<sup>1</sup> Although Muhammad Waseem's structuralist approach is more thorough than his, he suffers of a excessive over-reliance on the class origins of the power elites. His *gao-xpa-tia* (read by Asif Hussain's *late Pakistan: an Ideological State. The Case of Pakistan*), which is a specialized study of the elite groups operating in Pakistan, tabulates relative shares of landed, bourgeoisie, religious, industrial, professional and military elites in the power structure of Pakistan's polity,<sup>2</sup> but does not greatly concern itself with the ideological aspect of anxieties of the groups, nor does it establish the connections with the policies of state pursued by them. Shuja Tahir (1990) has simply defined the Pakistani political elite as comprising of those men who had been thrust into power

by virtue of their pre-independence activities. They were the key members of Muslim League and had worked specifically for the creation of Pakistan.<sup>46</sup> According to the civil political elite was the only real elite of Pakistan in 1947 and it was only after a few years that it was supplemented with the power of bureaucratic elite. The importance of the latter can be gauged from the fact that they were involved not only in the process of policy-making but were also instrumental in implementing this process. In 1959, the military elite's incorporation into the centre of power and structure was formalized with the induction of commander-in-chief of Pakistan armed forces General Ayub Khan into the Cabinet.<sup>47</sup> The instability of the political regime due to the unrepresentative character of its mandate and lack of democratic institutionalization made way for Ayub Khan to scrap altogether the rudiments of a democratic polity in Pakistan and impose Martial Law in 1958. This year which ended 1958 is regarded as the high point of the military bureaucratic nexus.

Jamali Malik's usage of the category named *Colonial Urban Sector* of a US is most helpful in situating the socio-economic contours of the concerned players. As described by Malik, the CUS consists of representatives of the colonial state especially of large trade associations, representatives of government, the higher grades of bureaucracy, the police and the army professionals and the self-employed, the intelligentsia and the higher formal sector of education.

The agricultural elite has been categorized *Indian separately*.<sup>48</sup> This helps explain the role of colonial education, modernization, etc. in the life. Like Anjuman-i-Jamia, Sahitya, Anglihi College, and Government College Lahore instilling the religious and western liberal worldview of the power elites. It is from these institutions of modern learning that most members of the power elites have received their education. A considerable majority of the senior bureaucrats, military officers and powerful landlords share these similar educational backgrounds. In this context, the identity to make up of these power elites can just be deduced in the word

Smith's power system as that of a modernized Muslim bourgeoisie who maintain a generalized and sometimes profound allegiance to a somewhat undefined Islam and an operative and sometimes fictitious sentiment of cohesion with the Muslim community.<sup>49</sup>

What Smith has referred to as an 'undefined Islam' can be understood in a broader way within the discourse. Islamic Muslims are imposing upon the religious worldview a new modernized Islamic Ideology who later became the power elites of Pakistan. How the discourse tradition which developed within Islamic Muslim world was re-generated

the power elites in their policies regarding Islam in Pakistan can be highlighted by alluding to a number of sources dating back to that period.

### 6.8. RELATING ISLAMIC MODERNISM TO PAKISTANI POWER ELITES

To begin with, the link between the ideas espoused by various Islamic Modernists and critics of reified Islamic traditions and the religious worldview of the Pakistani power elite can be amply corroborated by citing references from their own statements and writings. Statements to these effects were made at different forums by individuals of significant governmental authority and observations issued in several imperial and judicial reports, commissions and decisions. Indeed, the founder of the new state expressed his solemn belief a few months before his death: 'Salvation lies in following the good rules and conduct set for us by our great saving ver the Prophet of Islam. Let us lay the foundations of our democracy on the basis of truly Islamic ideals and principles.'

Laqat Ali Khan, the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, stated in unequivocal terms that theocracy or a government by priests was an idea alien to Islam and that using this term for the future polity of Pakistan was an act of mischievous propaganda. Speaking at the occasion of All Pakistan Political Conference held in 1949 at the Punjab University, Abdur Rah Nishtar—the Governor of Punjab—spoke of the 'basic guiding principles of the Quran and Hadith' and the provision for a variation of laws and policies in conformity with these principles.<sup>14</sup> Prime Minister of Pakistan Khwaja Nazimuddin (1951–53) emphatically asserted:

The principles enunciated by Islam have to be interpreted in terms of the democratic constitutional practice of the twentieth century... so that we could bring about a synthesis not only of the fundamental teachings of our faith and the requirements of a genuine democracy but also of the requirements of the twentieth century and best elements in our own tradition and history.<sup>15</sup>

There is then little wonder that the legislative measures adopted and constitutional schemes proposed during this period were reflective of the ideas highlighted above. The passage of First Objectives Resolution was one such example when Pakistan was effectively declared an Islamic state exercising authority delegated to it by Allah through the people of Pakistan. But this statement was also in the Resolution, which has served

as a preamble for the successive constitutions of Pakistan did not envision any special authority for the Ulama nor accord recognition to their possible role in the actualization of Resolutions' provisions. What piqued certain quarters of the Ulama even further were parts of the Objectives Resolution which "clearly hastened the need for democratic polity and protection of minority rights."<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, for the drafters of the Resolution and members of the house of steeped in the traditions of Western liberalism, the Objectives Resolution was no more than a vaguely pious statement without any substantial consequences for the political scrap of the country. In their opinion, "By acknowledging God's sovereignty the Objectives Resolution recognized the authority of the people as derived from God and delegated by the people to the Constituent Assembly with the purpose of making a Constitution for the sovereign state of Pakistan."<sup>17</sup>

Hence, by the time the first constitution of Pakistan was drafted in 1956, the power elite had allowed only for a ceremonial acceptance of the constitution with Islamic principles and the acceptance of some lesser demands of the Islamic parties like designating the state an Islamic Republic. The recommendations made by the Objectives Resolution Board of Ulama, Islamic Board of Islamic teachings and the Basic Principles Committee for naming it as "Islamic" the Constitution itself was not even read or mentioned as the official religion of the state and the National Assembly speaker who was to assume the office of presidency in the absence of the latter for whatever reason was not required to be a Muslim. A similar constitutional clause was enshrined in the 1962 and 1973 constitutions stipulating that "laws to be enacted in Quran and Sunnah were to be enacted."<sup>18</sup> However, this did not lead to a large scale reworking of the existing laws, nor was the aim of building up the repositories of Islamic knowledge, consultation, legislative and executive channels achieved.<sup>19</sup> Even when changes were proposed in the existing laws, the opportunity was used to undermine the authority of Ulama by ignoring the traditional reading and understanding of Quranic edicts enlarging the scope of legislative powers, thereby giving legislative relief where it was hitherto wanting in the traditionally practiced Islamic law.<sup>20</sup>

The much emphasized emphasis on the want of dynamism in the use of Islamic law was disputed by Maulana Maududi in 1958. He was responding to a statement by S.A. Rahman—who at that time was serving as Judge of Supreme Court West Pakistan—claiming that fresh legislation was wide open and that the classical jurisprudence in compendiums needed to be updated, albeit done with the permanent



values' specified by the Quran, so as to make them compatible with the challenges and demands of the modern world.<sup>8</sup> Rahmatan as head of the commission set up in 1958 for law reforms and even otherwise had stood for the vindication of majority of population's preference for embodiment of Islamic principles in law and constitution.<sup>9</sup> It was only that he wanted the task to be entrusted to chosen representatives instead of Ulama so as to leave the room open for new legislation and re-interpretation of the old ones. He rebuked Aslan Jeynepov, asserting that in matters of ritual practices the Sunnah has been controversial, definite and hence binding, but for the rest one needs to be dependent on Hadith which is a less credible source and requires authentication on the basis of a critical analysis. Maududi's response was a succinct reminder to the oft-repeated modernist argument in favour of fresh legislation and reformation of existing laws, he argued that the former was not simply a pious wish, discarded for its values of permanence but it was emanated with the task of setting up an Islamic Order based upon divine principles. The laws introduced for this purpose and the role of the practice of interpretation and implementation had come down to the Muslims in the form of *Hadith* and *Sunnat*.<sup>10</sup>

The members of the superior judiciary, however, were convinced in their distrust of the Hadith literature. The famous *Moin Report*—a probe into the Punjab disturbances of 1953 resulting from aggressive agitation on side of decedents Ahmadis as non-Muslims—expressed its reservation about the authenticity of Hadith literature and its authority to determine the legal code.<sup>11</sup> The report, probably inadvertently reiterated through A's viewpoint on the role and status of Hadith by questioning, essentially whether the laws are given by the Prophet or are created by scholars who should necessarily be followed gratefully so as not to jeopardise the legal system, in which people of these countries have always been accustomed to, or on the principles have to be adopted.<sup>12</sup>

The report was extremely critical of the idea of mixing state with religion and the role of Islam in politics. It further went on to bring the then popular political ideology of *Islamic unity* and *Islamic history* to its place as only a sectarian principle of state without mentioning by words. A confirmation of *Islamic unity* can be seen in an important decision delivered by Justice Shah in 1960. The judgment reverts to contrast in up to the *Islamic unity* of high justice of Islam with a world view who had remained in like divided views on the sources of Islamic law and position of the interpretation. He judiciously

for himself the right to interpret the 'permanent values of Islam' and the laws derived therein. He maintained the view that if Abu Hanifa said 'he right to interpret the Quran without the assistance of traditions and in the light of the existing circumstances, then the same could not be denied to other Muslims. Such blind adherence to the authority of the grand masters of veterinary way to lead to stagnation in thought and deprive Islam of its status as a dynamic universal religion.' He was further of the view that 'The exegesis of the Quran should be developed by judges as well as by the chosen representatives of the people by a subtle method of reasoning and analogy in the light of the given facts.'<sup>14</sup> The observations made by the judge about the historicity of Hadith literature and the 'objectable content of some its narrations' was not so dissimilar from that of *later* *Islam*. He was especially critical of those traditions relating to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad that 'which disclose in a naked manner the private discourses between them and the Prophet'. Such attitudes towards authentic collections of Hadith are ideas regarding the use of the modern state for amendment of Islamic law were translated into concrete measures as the power of its adopted a conscious policy of promoting what is considered to be a humanist and modernist interpretation of Islam and curtailment of obscurantist forces.

## 6.9. INSTITUTING ISLAMIC MODERNISM

In order to achieve the purpose of establishing Islamic Modernism as an inspired influence in determining the role of Islam, Pakistan state institutional arrangements were made and a number of individuals sponsored to disseminate his stature faced with such ideas. The Institute for the Reconstruction of Islam set up by the government of Punjab a few months after the creation of Pakistan was one such institution. It was headed by Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) an Austrian Jewish convert to Islam with Nazir Muzaffar acting as its assistant director. During the brief period for which this institute remained in existence, Muhammad Asad came up with some facts in which he elaborated the concept of an Islamic state. He put forward the view that no specific form of government had been prescribed by Islam and it was up to the Muslims in every age to agree on one that suits their conditions. However, any such state can be based on the principles of certain convictions and embody some essential Islamic ideals such as supremacy of the Quran and Sunna, social economic justice, universal suffrage and the right to dissent and permission to form political parties.<sup>15</sup>

And that time an Iqbal Academy was also established in 1950 which was entrusted with the task of promoting the philosophy of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and to project him as the poet philosopher of Pakistan. The first monograph published by this academy was written by Khwaja Ahmed Hakeem and its title was *Qawm aur Musavvayat* Iqbal and Mulla. The main thrust of the treatise was to portray Iqbal as a champion of progressive ideas at odds with the stagnant theological approach of the Muslim religious figure. Of more significance was the Urdu Society of Pakistan (Institute for Islamic Culture) which was established in 1954 in Lahore and was largely due to the efforts of Khwaja Ahmed Hakeem who moved upon his old friend to the days of his service in the princely state of Hyderabad. The then Governor General Liaquat Muhammad was at the initiative and laid the cornerstone of an institute that could popularise a modernist interpretation of Islam and counteract the rise of Islam fundamentalist forces.<sup>1</sup> The assigned task required a reappraisal of the centuries old jurisprudential laws and the impact of the ignorance to amend them or draft wholly new ones more suited to modern times. For this purpose, Khalifa Abdul Haq—like many other modernist thinkers of Islam in South Asia, especially Wahid Ahmad Faruqi—resorted to distinguishing the Permanent or Impermanent values of Islam. According to the permanent laws of Islam as prescribed in the Quran were not more than ten pages. The rest were Permanent values and—ad primacy in the light of which laws were to be drafted. While these values and principles were permanent, the laws drafted within the process demarcated by them remained subject to revision to cope with the changes of changing times. So long as the debating on the ideological extending to a new domain of social and political exigencies of domains of societal life and state activities, observed:

The bulk of Islam's law comes from such principles which can only be properly understood by the Muslim themselves, a new Islamic field of research is that before having a clear understanding of such a new demand for more knowledge. Such a new demand is Islam which is not to be identified with any one particular time or place. It is a dynamic and a living reality that is complete in its objectives, it is a way of life, opposing the evils with which they often get contaminated.

A debate on the extent to which Islamic jurisprudence has involved a disavowal on the real and significance of flourish. This came about because their justifications were limiting themselves to stating that in the laws of the Quran or in the hadith and did not take into account the fact

that bulk of the Islamic laws are derived from the jurisprudence, relevant sayings and arbitrations of the Prophet and their later incorporation in Hadith collections and codification in the books of Fiqh. It may not have been possible for the Institute for Islamic Culture to outrightly defend with the view of Ahl al-Quran in ascribing a temporary status to the juristic interpretation of Islam or to discard at least Sunnat as a source of guidance in the affairs of state and individual belief and practice. The status of Hadith literature was, however, liable to be as of doubtful standing and significance. Khawaja's view over Hadith was: "This is a very uncertain and amorphous source since verbal transmissions through six or more generations, distorted by ignorance, preoccupied interests and factional strife cannot serve as sure guides."<sup>1</sup> The policy of the Institute with regard to the concept of modern state's legislative authority and especially to the status of Hadith is evidenced by the inclusion of Khawaja Ibad Ullah Akhtar and Ishtiaq Shah Phulwarwalla—both with varying degrees of affiliation with the Ahl al-Quran version of Islam—in the Institute in the publication of their works. They were among the first research fellows—among others, that had either madrasa training or were college graduates—who were induced into the Institute<sup>2</sup> and had a rigorous and academic outlook that carried forward the idea of a fresh enquiry into the Islamic law limiting the role of the Ulama in interpretations of Islamic texts and avoiding an overreliance on Quran, state and religion.

The published works of these research fellows were also indicative of the intellectual outlook of the Institute itself and the spirit of free enquiry and thought to encourage among the intelligentsia interested in the discourse on Islam. As the editor of *Al-Bayan*, Khawaja Ibad Ullah Akhtar had suggested a broad range of powers to state and justified legislation in those aspects of Islamic law derived by the Prophet and later day jurists. According to him, the delegation of these extensive legislative powers stemmed from the idea that the Sharia of Islam was not static, fixed or defined. No man's findings or dictates—no matter how respected his designation may be or widely recognized his authority as a scholar—had been—could be put forward as immutable law. It rested exclusively with the appointed and representative government of the Muslims to give shape to Islamic laws and rules. In doing so the consultative assembly could benefit from a variety of sources including personal judgments of learned scholars and those of the Prophet as recorded in the form of Hadith but arrived at after a process of consultation with his Companions and considerations of the prevailing circumstances. The judgments so made

may have had a binding obligation during the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) but now with an assembly in place, the previous obligations under law could be put to revisioning by members of the assembly.<sup>10</sup> In one of the lectures given by Idrar Saqaf-i-Islamiyya, Hujjatullah Akbari claimed that *al-Ashb* (The Book)—an appellation usually understood as referring to the *Qur'an*—was actually a reference to the Book of Nature. He went on to say that *Qur'an* was one mode of saying that Book of Nature and not the *Kitāb al-Qur'an* because there could be a degree of scepticism in every Book including the *Qur'an* but not in the Book of Nature. Writing like this, Idrar Saqaf-i-Islamiyya said that Hujjatullah Akbari had been a known member of *Ahl al-Qur'an* even though he had later developed differences with its fundamental views on the nature of the number of daily prayers and fasts during the month of Ramazan, served to reinforce various insights regarding the working of *Idrar Saqaf-i-Islamiyya*.

Equally or more important to the Ulama were the works of Jafar Shah Pirmawar, published by the *Idara*. In his numerous monographs and tracts for the Institute he supported the divorce of Islam from modernity. These included references to the marriage laws, introduction of family planning techniques and continuation of interest free banking. His own proposal for reforms in the marriage law appeared before the setting up of a Marriage Commission in 1955. In that Jafar Shah supported the introduction of a new procedure by setting up arbitration councils. The underlying argument was that the provision of a property was a condition of marriage and the state had the authority to intervene in such cases. As for the problem of interest and the banking system, Jafar Shah contributed a discussion in *Samak* on a model of interest free banking in banking. Due to debate various issues of societal and state concerns—an which a retired government official had asked whether the interest received by him in the form of provident fund and monthly pension came under the category of *riba* or not. In his response, Jafar Shah wrote that the term *Riba* employed by the *Qur'an* was not applicable as *riba* and interest were not the same. In his view, *riba* was a word used in the *Qur'an* which was prohibited but interest in terms of money was not prohibited interest which in its modern form is quite different from what was prevalent during the Prophet's lifetime—were permissible.<sup>11</sup>

Such insights on the part of *Ahl al-Qur'an* scholars were not necessarily compelled by their association with *Idara Saqaf-i-Islamiyya* but came to them naturally as well. It was because degradation or a least under-training of past authorities as arbiters in matters of law and

interpretation was common to all the Ahl al-Qur'ān scholars. Therefore, even when some Ahl al-Qur'ān scholars were not part of state-run institutes, their writings as individual capacities were no different from those affiliated with Idara Saqafat-e-Islamiya and, hence, were relevant to the ongoing debate on state-Islam relationship in Pakistan. The best example in this regard is that of Tahirana Amad who, after Partition (1947), had migrated to East Pakistan. He allowed considerable powers to the ruling authority in its worldly dealings. According to him, there was ample room for modification in practice and alteration in law to accommodate changes that had taken place over a period of time rendering it difficult for previously established norms or rules to be applicable. He did not find any fault with non-scholars running the administration of the state and regulating for it instead of men with more specialised knowledge of Islam. According to him, a king was appointed in the life of Prophet Samuel as reported in the Qur'an as well. The appointed king could never have matched the knowledge of the Prophet in matters of religion. The fact that he was still preferred over a Prophet for running of state affairs signified that those less qualified as scholars of religion but experienced in managing the political-administrative affairs of the country had been given the rule over the country and their being so could not be considered an un-Islamic practice. Iqbal held the view that it was among the duties of the Caliph or the ruler to ensure that the principles of Islam and those postulates of law which had been established in the Qur'an and the authentic practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) were implemented and no digression allowed to take place. Anything which he incongruent with Qur'anic teachings or its explicit ruling could not put to scrutiny. For the works of the earlier learned jurists, revision could be made of those aspects of law which were found not to be keeping pace with the necessities of modern age.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, he was even granted to the ruling authority the right to put the entire and logical framework, as deemed appropriate by it, to arrive at those principles and practices which were complemented by the Prophet and later by the Right-Guided Caliphs.

#### 6.10. AYUB KHAN'S VISION OF ISLAM AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN PAKISTAN, 1958-1969

The period of Ayub Khan's rule (1958-69) provides the best example of the Pakistani power elites calculated policies to push through certain reforms, guaranteeing the influence of Ulama and a total self-conceived

version of the scientific and rationalist Islam among the people. To begin with, Ayub Khan—like many other like-minded members of the power elites, especially in the military—believed in Islam as a progressive, egalitarian, and dynamic force whose real spirit was waning among the Muslims of the day because it had slipped into the hands of regressive Muslims. In order to dwarf all the aristocratic, capitalist and theological forces of regression, Ayub proposed—even before he had overthrown the government—building up a political, social and economic institutions of Pakistan on the principles of the Holy Quran.<sup>16</sup> Such framing of the institutions was not to result in stagnation, as the task was to be entrusted to the intelligence of the chosen representatives of the people, and also because Ayub's own concept of an Islamic state was not so distant far from that of Khwaja Aqbal Hakim of Muhammad Asad. He believed that the Quran did not ordain a specific constitution for an Islamic state and that it was left open to the Rightly Guided Caliphs after the death of the Prophet to run the affairs of state in the understanding of Islamic principles in a particular situation. In his own words: "The conclusion was inescapable that Islam had not prescribed any particular pattern of government, but had left it to the community to evolve its own pattern to suit its circumstances, provided that the principles of the Quran and the Sunnah were observed."<sup>17</sup> Unlike others, however, Ayub did not shirk from expressing the mutability of rules and regulations derivable directly from the Quran. In a letter to William Ahmed Parwez, he wrote:

If we want to re-establish free enquiry without which no progress is possible then I cannot see how you can be "convinced to a decision that there is the Quranic rule respecting the principle matters of constitution and regulations" the only solution to this is to re-examine with the utmost care of the matter. Unless this happens, I do not foresee any future for Muslims in this new world.<sup>18</sup>

Even for a radically revisionist Islamic thinker like Parwez, it was difficult to accept Ayub's ideas. He interpreted the latter's statement as suggesting that the meanings of the Quran should be considered anew in the light of prevailing circumstances. Thus, he responded that the phrase cannot possibly mean that the Quran should be compartmentalized as being partly immutable, partly redundant, and partly alterable.<sup>19</sup> Yet Ayub repeated his faith in what he vaguely understood as principles of an *ideally* Islamic state. But it was not less upon him that he believed that Islam could not create a progressive nationhood. This task required provision





Modernism and encouraged and supported those among the religious circles that came close to sharing his ideas. In pursuance of the former agenda, he appointed Fazlur Rahman in 1962 as Director of the newly established Centre Institute of Islamic Research. As for the latter part of the strategy Ayub developed a special nexus with Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, who in turn supported the regime and its policies wholeheartedly.

In the following sections of the chapter an attempt has been made to detail upon the policies of Ayub Khan to use Islam as a source for progressive and cohesive nationhood. These included introducing liberal reforms in Islamic law, and extending support to independent and like-minded individuals with the purpose of promoting a discursive space for Islamic Modernism in opposition to that of the reified Islamic traditions. It will be explained that this strategy reached its peak in 1961 when a major effort was made to promulgate the supremacy of Islamic Modernism over the 'Mullahs'.

### 6.11. LIBERALIZING ISLAMIC LAWS IN THE NAME OF SOCIAL REFORM: THE FAMILY LAWS OF 1961

The promulgation of the Family Laws in 1961 offers the most important example in which the government availed the authority of Islam and appropriated for itself, albeit briefly, the right to legislate in matters of private law, hence encroaching upon the domain which had been held exclusively by the Umma ever since the British period. In the post-1947 period, and especially during General Ziaul Haq's era, the situation was reversed and the state legislated in public and during the terms of Islam-specific laws.

The issue of reform in the family law to the benefit of the women had been raised in British India as well where it had become exceedingly difficult for women to seek divorce from their husbands and to claim alimony and maintenance allowance in case a divorce was granted. The disempowerment of the women from initiating divorce proceedings had given rise to sporadic cases, many of which were won by women who became apostates in order to escape the constraints of a possible way of divorce according to the Hanafi law. Alarmed by this situation, a notable scholar Asad Ali Khan was asked to prepare the application of Maliki law, even though such interchange of legal systems was never allowed by the Umma, so as to ease the difficulties faced women by allowing them the right to initiate divorce proceedings. The Dissolution of Muslim Marriages Act, incorporating these recommendations, was passed in 1939.

The question of women's rights and reforms in family laws became a central issue of concern after independence. What brought it to the fore in public political life was the event of the then Prime Minister Muhammad Ali Jinnah's marriage. His personal secretary and others came on the so-called women's groups that followed. The Jinnahs, raised by these groups, forced the government to appoint a commission to propose suitable reforms in the Muslim personal law. The Marriage Commission thus appointed comprised of Chief Justice Abdul Kashid, Begum Sha-Nawaz Begum Awaraz, Ahmad Begum Shams Khatun, Aqil Hakim, Nazim Rabbani and Hasham ul-Jalil Khanani. The commission prepared its report in the light of the responses by all these religious groups and individuals to a questionnaire sent out by the commission. The recommendations of the commission were large ones which had already been offered by Jinnah Shah (the new) and published by the Azara Saqafat Isamiyya. It called for divorce rights and maintenance for women and variable limitations on the practice of polygamy. The argument was a repetition of that of Khwaja Abdul Wahab in support of limitations of polygamy and. Accordingly, the report of the Marriage Commission stated that "In our laws and regulations prescribed by the Quran do not exceed a few pages. But among this position on Islamic law, it was tacitly being impudently in contradiction with the ideas of Ghulam Ahmad (he was) that the Quran was not a binding source of authority. The report was that Prophet Muhammad (he was) did not fix rules and laws and he was not bound from making it but left with the community to later times. His immediate followers made use of what he said to settle with people and they were not bound by the Quran and Sunna. It dealt with new emerging issues." Hence, in an age of progress and modern spirit, it was at the expense of lesser interpreted provisions and regulations of Hadith to extend the scope for changes in Muslim personal law was justified.

The proposals submitted by the Marriage Commission were not immediately amenable to legal reforms. In fact, opposition made by the Ulama and conservative groups in the country. However, with the advent of Muslim League the reformist agenda of new women's marital law and reformation (Quranic) and (Khatun) kindled the spiritual efforts of women's groups to push the recommendations of the Marriage Commission implemented. These efforts came to fruition. And when the new laws came into existence, the provisions of the Ordinance of rationality, polygamy provided for the reputation of marriage and divorce secured maintenance rights for women and awarded a compulsory share in the

inheritance to the children of a predeceased son or daughter. The Ordinance was an improvement on the Muslim Marriage Law from 1929-30 which had allowed women to initiate divorce proceedings and enhanced the chances of settling matrimonial disputes amicably and also amended the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929 (famously known as the Sarda Bill) by raising the legal age for marriage from 14 to 16 years for females and from 18 to 21 years for males.<sup>20</sup>

The Ordinance, by providing and promoting it, resulted in giving it different meanings to its votaries and also to its opponents. Such issues as the abolition of child marriages and orphaned granddaughters' right to property had long been demands of the Hindu community and the Ahimsa Qutub, the future of the Hindu demand especially, was clearly an affirmation of the stance taken by Mahatma Gandhi in America and later supported by Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose. Similarly, as the Ordinance came into force, the various attempts to interpret Islamic law was a reaction to the Muslim Ahmadiyya movement, reversing the dualism between the temporal and religious spheres. The codification of Islamic law, as far as Ayub Khan was concerned, the promulgation of the Ordinance, despite severe opposition, impressed upon the minds of its targeted audience of Muslims and non-Muslims alike the policies regarding Islam that he wanted to pursue. What was equally important for him was the rationale which the new changes in Islamic law were being introduced at the expense of ignoring the rational principles of justice. Perhaps for the first time in Pakistan, an attempt had been made to provide a place of legislation, assuring changes in the structure of family law and that only by a legal team whose knowledge was not purely Islamic, concerned that of the modern era, in the time. It was hence more a question of anchoring the social functions of the women and also a strategy to pull the women and disengage them from what they regarded as their religious and privileged domain, claiming the subject of Islamic law. The new legislation, however, could be a new framework of law without touching the impression that it was being done under pressure from religious forces or that the prime appeal of them was a privilege or when it came to dealing with them in any manner.

In opposition to the change despite the fact that they issued a joint statement in the condemnation of these laws—had different objectives towards the fundamentalist of the reforms introduced and amendments required to rectify its aberrations. Their objective was to bring the regulation of marriages compulsory and the improvement of the marriage contract

compliance. The prescription of second marriage by involving the local administration was unanimously considered by them as an appendix to Islamic laws. Instead of putting restrictions on males supposedly unfettered right to marry more than one wife, the Ulama proposed judicial safeguards for the aggrieved wife and involvement of judiciary to settle matters in her favour. Child marriages were not disallowed by them on the account of their preferred reading of a particular Quranic verse concerning marrying off non-menstruating girls.<sup>41</sup> With regard to divorce procedure stipulated in the Ordinance, there did emerge differences among the Ulama themselves along theological lines. According to the provisions of the Ordinance, the mere pronouncement of 'I Divorce thee three times at a single sitting' (the so-called triple divorce) over a prolonged period did not bring about a legal divorce between the couple. It was to be taken as a starting point of divorce proceedings spanning over a few months in which first there had to be an arbitration council to bring the estranged parties together and negotiate a settlement for amending the marital breakup. This proposed arrangement boldly refuted the established notion in the Islamic law whereby the *irrevocable divorce* (*talak-e-biddai*) ends the marriage. By refusing to accept this procedure, the drafters of the law were effectively appropriating for themselves a right to amend anomalies in Islamic law. In their view, the *talak-e-biddai* was no longer the *talak* edicts but the *talak* sanctioned by the courts that carried legal weightage in determining the dissolution of marriage or divorce. Among the Ahl-i-Hadith, however, triple divorce *at once sitting* is considered equivalent to a single divorce and not to the three mandatory for dissolving a marriage. This was why the Ahl-i-Hadith leader Dar-ul-Ifta was reluctant to let the Ulama to make cautious appraisal of the proposed law and not to outrightly reject it. The Ahl-i-Hadith insisted that even though the present rules were not consonant with Islamic texts, to be strict, it would be unwise not to support legislation in favour of the suppressed classes that could even be justified in terms of its compatibility with Islamic laws and ethos.<sup>42</sup>

Other than the Ahl-i-Hadith, many among the supporters of the Ordinance also found the new divorce procedure objectionable. *Imam al-Fazlurrahman* criticised that a arbitration commission cannot yet be formed before the pronouncement of divorce. Once this pronouncement had been made, it was no longer possible to put forth the matter in front of a council.<sup>43</sup> Even among the members of the Council of Islamic Ideology, the majority opinion was that the Quranic injunctions regarding divorce arbitration had been interpreted to result in a continued practical

divorce procedure being adopted. Another point of dispute among the Council members was the issue of orphaned granddaughters' right to inheritance. J. N. D. Anderson—the most well-known authority on law reforms across the Muslim world—noted the complications arising out of the new arrangement enforced by the Family Laws. He compared the Pakistani law with similar reforms in Iraq where the law did not provide for an explicit share to the orphaned granddaughter but made a provision for a mandatory will in their favour. On the imbalance resulting from the provisions of the Pakistani Family Laws on the traditional scheme of distributing shares among the legatees, Anderson wrote:

Suppose there were only two legatees, a daughter and the daughter of a predeceased son. In a case under the Hanafi law, the daughter would normally take one-half and the granddaughter one-sixth and then finally the predeceased son's estate. In the reform, the daughter would receive three-quarters of the estate and the granddaughter one-quarter whereas under the Pakistani Ordinance the granddaughter would receive one-third for the granddaughter would step into the shoes of her deceased father and take two-thirds of the whole estate, leaving only one-third to her aunt. And the second objection is that whereas the device of orphaned legatees can find *some* support in the classical texts, the introduction of a right of representation can find none whatever.

Despite clear discrepancies in the Islamic content of the Family Laws, as admitted by its proponents and pointed out by the opponents, all efforts to repeal it failed. A Muslim Family Laws Ordinance ( repeals Bill was moved in the Assembly by Anwar Ashraf Khan in June 1965. The Bill failed to muster the required majority. A more serious challenge to the Family Laws came under the Zulfikar Ali Bhutto regime when the new constitution issued a strongly worded recommendation for the abolition of these laws. According to the statement

the Muslim family laws were based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnat*. But against the Holy *Qur'an* and *Sunnat*, the *Shari'ah* has declared the *Qadimi* law to the extent of *hadd* a *fasad* and *zina* and *qadimi* law is a bad blot on the glorious name of *Islam* and the *Shari'ah* and such a legislation in our country's name need not be preserved. Let us call the plot altogether *erf* and now repeal.<sup>20</sup>

General Muhammad Yahya Khan, a known sympathiser of Chaudhry Ahmad Faraz in those days and a close aide of the then President because of his assignment to run the important reform of Ministry—education—has he

had prevailed upon General Zia-ul-Haq 'not to touch these laws'.<sup>77</sup> He defended these laws because according to him they offered some relief to women and also probably because of his own inclinations towards Faruqi's ideas, some of which had been incorporated into the Family Laws. However, with the coming of these laws under the jurisdiction of the Federal Shariat Court after a decision of the appellate court in 1993, certain provisions became vulnerable to revision or outright repeal. The result was a decision by the Federal Shariat Court in 2000 stating that the section 4 of the said Ordinance dealing with the right to maintenance of the orphaned grandchild is repugnant to the injunctions of Islam and nugatory to the scheme of succession envisaged by the Quran.<sup>78</sup> An appeal against this decision is now pending with the Shariat Bench of the Supreme Court.

## 6.12. 'INSTITUTIONALIZED LIBERALISM' UNDER

### DR FAZLUR RAHMAN

Fazlur Rahman's association with the Ayub government raised several controversies during his lifetime among the secular agencies of the regime. What fuelled their suspicions was the alleged similarity between the views of Fazlur Rahman and Ghulam Ahmed Faruqi on the status of Hadith and Sunnah, although with regard to the latter Rahman claimed to be toying with the traditional beliefs of the Muslims. His controversial ideas in disregard of some unanimously agreed upon dogmas among Muslims came to light when the question of *Riba* (usury) was discussed in 1962. The issue cropped up because of the delay in a passage of the Bridge Bill on the ground that it was un-Islamic for the reason that it hewed incomes and expenditures calculated on the basis of interest rates. When the matter was put to the Council of Islamic Ideology, of which Fazlur Rahman too was a member, it was stipulated in its report that the present-day realities were not favourable for the elimination of *Riba*. It also cited concern and criticism of certain Ahadith which clashed with the Council's orders regarding the term *Riba* and respectively called for a study for

its more detailed by the Council was leaked to the Press leading to a considerable outcry from the public. Fazlur Rahman was primarily framed as the author of this passage in the Bill due to his close proximity with the person and ideas of Ayub Khan. What also came under criticism was Fazlur Rahman's continuing links with the Islamic Studies Centre of the McGill University and his scheme of inviting scholars from abroad to train seminars within the country for research in Islam.<sup>79</sup> But regardless of these

important step, Rahman continued to enjoy the trust and support of Ayub Khan, and within he drew circles of the Council of Islamic Ideology, he did not deter from offering his bold and ingenious interpretation on various issues. One interesting example is that of the discussion on proposed ban on alcohol in Pakistan. While the rest of the members were unanimously in favouring a ban on all drinks with the exception of alcoholic contents, Rahman diverged by arguing the permissibility of moderate drinking provided it does not result in intoxication. By this logic, he allowed the consumption of beer and therefore to make a few witty drink term drinks with a little bit of alcohol (up to 5 per cent) like that of beer, whose consumption was considered a deplorable by some Companions and jurists.

In 1972, Rahman was again dragged into controversy over the question of mechanical slaughter of the Qur'an. High Commission of London had sought an opinion on absolute decision of British authorities to not to be used as a hindrance slaughter of animals meant for their export. Although Mufti Shafi—the most prominent and learned of the London scholars at that time—decreed in the favour of this practice on the condition that the person slaughtering the animal must recite *Bismillah*, Rahman's statement—*not even pronouncing Bismillah was not required* became highly controversial in the light of the reports that the Government of Pakistan was covertly engaged in exporting mechanical slaughterhouses. The controversy continued again, this time fuelled further by the contents of a book *Islam* which had been published a year ago and in which he was alleged to have claimed that Qur'an was not external to Prophet Muhammad (saw) and that the divine inspiration in fact came from within him. Although he had made no reference to Qur'an, Rahman was denounced as *Qur'anic Quraan*—denier of Qur'an, whose title carried tribute to Allah (saw) who was declared *Munkar al-Sunnat*—denier of Sunnah. His book was taken up to the Parliament level as a number of demonstrations took place during 1978 and execution of *fatwa* by Islamic Research Council, a government sponsored organisation to commemorate the fortieth hundred anniversary of the Revelation of Qur'an which served as a forum for exposing liberal heresies and modernist interpretations of Islam and hence, had a very high reputation among religious groups denouncing Rahman. The programme—which by that time had lost considerable ground to opposition by mass organisations on various political issues—could only offer a meek support to Rahman. An agitation went out

it continued between May and August 1968, the law minister S.M. Zafar advised Fazlur Rahman to quit.<sup>14</sup>

It should, however, be noted that Fazlur Rahman's directorship of the Islamic Research Institute did not lead to churning out of religious literature that was always in tune with the religious worldview of Ayub Khan.<sup>15</sup> What was more worthy of consideration was the perception about the religious ideas of Fazlur Rahman that had cropped up in the minds of the Ulama and Ayub's continued willingness to stand by him despite pressures of contrary nature.

### 6.13. THE AYUB-PARWEZ 'NEXUS' DURING THE 1960s

Ayub's support of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez and his interest in promoting the farmers' ideas and occasional assisting its organisational growth was due to the confluence of the religious ideas of the two on matters of mutual concerns. The link between them was an open secret during the whole of Ayub's period and was an important aspect of his policies regarding Islam that invited hostile reactions from conservative quarters.<sup>16</sup> The intense dislike of the Ulama for Parwez and his proximity to the government circles was not lost upon Ayub Khan. Confidential reports submitted to the government highlighted the reasons for such animosity between the Ulama and Parwez.<sup>17</sup> The rivalry between the two was noted the very day predated the creation of Pakistan when Parwez opposed the national strategy, inclined Ulama on the issue of federalism and later reiterated their ideas to establish a theocracy in Pakistan.<sup>18</sup> The report advised that the government distance itself from 'P' i.e. Parwez, to dispel the perception of the influence of his ideas in the framing of the constitution and other reforms being introduced by the regime. The situation was being exploited by the Ulama who were indirectly challenging the president directly but had found an indirect method of criticizing the president as in the Martial Law regime by launching a campaign against 'P'. They were also apprehensive of the fact that the new Constitution that was being formulated might be influenced by the views of 'P'. The *fatwas* (religious edicts) issued by these Ulama against 'P' a few days before the announcement of the new Constitution was in fact meant to serve as a basis for the opposition of the Constitution if it contained any material supportive of the views of 'P'. For these reasons, the report noted that it was not in the government's interest to strengthen the musings of the opposition. At the same time it was deemed inadvisable to suppress the ideas of 'P' so that the religious forces do not regard themselves



possessing a clear sense of leverage over the regime. The immediate course of action suggested was that he meet with the senior Ayub family Council and be drawn into a joint press release as it would dramatically put the side of "unity" he never claimed to belong to any side. Parwez liked with Ayub Khan in the following weeks, however, more to seem to have been affected much by this report.

A cordial relationship with almost all the successors equated to Pakistan was perhaps considered vital by several of the survival strategy activists, especially oppositionists, by the Chama Bazaar Ayub. There were similar rumors of government assistance to Parwez. One tower of the old Lal Mahal in Islamabad, the case in which Parwez was mostly untrusting of the main contemporary process and as a result of the ruling regime Parwez extended a long hand to the Nationalists, as he always made a direct frontal attack against the government, often at the price of a poor public image of him at important public and international forums. Another reason to which he never was averse Parwez was his role of dissolution of the Constituent Assembly in 1959 which awarded the president of Bangladesh under the new constitution. The middle path in this part of Pakistan—passing a revolution resulting in the amalgamation of Pakistan into India, at least, as a part of some confederacy, a checkmate throughout the Marxist wing of the PML. It was often he, a friend of Ayub Khan and then hastened to congratulate Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in his swearing in as the new ruler of Pakistan, although it was not long to come to power by ending in the massive way of an Ayub semi-democracy. Parwez requested a personal meeting with Bhutto, a proposed revision of a socialist economy, and created a full system in the capital.

Although some had expressed sympathy the democratic setup and imposing liberal democracy, the case for a more direct the President's attention was broken by a series of events that introduced to Ayub Khan by Habib ur Rahman who was a great admirer of Ayub's writings. Habib ur Rahman was a poet, he was a socialist and was responsible for the security arrangements whenever Ayub visited his ancestral hometown among nearby areas. This time he was offered by Habib ur Rahman from respect of the Marxist wing of Ayub Khan a close affinity was established between Ayub and Parwez. For the latter Ayub possessed heart and soul of a true Muslim undoubtedly attracted with the desire to strive for the greater glory of Islam. He pinned his hopes on Ayub for the setting up of a new Islamic state. In Ayub's coming to power Parwez visualized the complete end of some

Divine scheme for the enforcement of the Quranic principles: an accomplishment unique and unparalleled in the Muslim history since the days of Hazrat Abu Bakr and Hazrat Umar.<sup>39</sup> Ayub, on his part, admired the scholarly credentials of Parwez and shared his unorthodox approach towards Islam. On one occasion when Parwez called on Ayub Khan and presented him with one of his writings, Ayub noted down the following observation about Parwez:

He [Parwez] had written a very enlightening article on communism and the philosophy of Mao Tse Tung. We discussed that and told him that Islam's only hope of survival as a living philosophy was if the deep rust of conservatism of *mullahism* could be removed from it and the Muslim *mullah* be allowed to measure his principles in the light of current requirements and circumstances.<sup>40</sup>

Ayub wanted to make use of Parwez's scholarly knowledge of Islam, the mouthpiece of his organisation *Tulu' al-Islam* and the local *Tulu' al-Islam* units spread all over the country to facilitate Ayub's agenda of reform and propagation of religious ideas cherished by both of them. For this purpose a joint strategy was to be chalked out whereby the government was to support *Tulu' al-Islam* by financing the publication of certain reformist literature. In order to kick-start the publication project, Parwez requested substantial funds to allow Rs 150,000 per annum to purchase printing material and to hire office staff. This amount exceeded the additional sum of Rs 50,000 which, if granted, was to be used to buy a printing press for the organisation.<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to ascertain whether the requested funds were all furnished or not but there does exist documentary evidence that Parwez, or for that matter *Tulu' al-Islam*, was occasionally a recipient of direct financial support from Ayub Khan. In May 1964 a letter sent to Parwez from the President's secretary stated that as desired by the President, a bank draft worth Rs 25,000 was being sent for him for a special secretariat.<sup>42</sup> Parwez accepted the donation only after having made clear that this sum of money was intended to be spent towards the codification of the Quran and on other literature in English on the interpretation and understanding of the Quran.<sup>43</sup>

While the details about the procurement of funds were probably left to be sorted out between Parwez and members of the bureaucracy close to Ayub Khan like Qudrat Ullah Shihab and later Altaf Gauhar, governmental departments such as the Ministry of Information and the Bureau for National Reconstruction used to feed Parwez with the requirements of the state, although these two departments were not

always supportive of the ideas put forward by Farver. One such theme which was pursued by Farver with some enthusiasm was the introduction of one common sermon for the Friday prayers. He drafted a specimen sermon and sent them for approval to Brigadier F.H. Khan who headed the Bureau for National Reconstruction. Farver tried to ensure that the sermons were in consonance with the wishes of the Brigadier in terms of language and content and displayed a willingness to produce an entire collection. Nevertheless a month later he could be provided with a typewriter and a stenographer.<sup>11</sup> The project, however, could not take off as Bureau did not show much faith in its feasibility.

One project to which Ali Jinnah wanted to offer its services to the Bureau which he later was willing to accept readily was regarding a smear campaign against the Jamaat's imam and its leader and chief ideologue Maulana Maududi. The Jamaat and its leader had been a source of irritation for Ayub Khan for holding views that were antithetical to that of Ayub and especially its agitation for two against the regime. For once, imam Ali Jinnah had been harnessed to the project of carrying Pakistan and relations with Iran by writing an article about Iran on government's persecution of the Muslims in its country. On his part, Farver too had words to settle with Maududi. They two had once been supportive and appreciative of one another's efforts for the cause of Islam, but soon parted ways when Farver unfolded his ideas on Islam and Maududi's writings became increasingly targeted against the policies and the leadership of Muslim League. Soon after independence, Farver used *Islam* as a platform to launch bitter attacks against Jamaat's Islam by highlighting its alleged anti-Pakistan credentials during the 1950s and continuity of the same in independent Pakistan where Maududi was a party, military and government service under an anti-Islamic state and was unwilling to lend support to Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir as a part of its war time foreign policy, *Islam* targeted Jamaat's Islam as a poor base for the college graduates and middle classes by focusing on his ideas being an obstacle to women's rights and for minorities and by attacking very prominent of the Islamic and anti-patriarchal views of the state. An alternative was *Islam's* former teacher Maududi's stated claim to revive the *Ummah* (Islamic community) in prophetic mould. It was argued that Islamic Islam was to be based on Quran and Hadith and Maududi was to be the one authority on Islamic matters. Maududi himself had to say then it would had been a disappointment where Maududi was a single himself to have been a leader of any law or aspect of Islam as repugnance to Islam.

alleged inconsistency with Hadith.<sup>17</sup> Stretching the argument further *Jama'at Islam* asserted that if the opinion of some Deobandi and Ahl-i-Hadith scholars who regarded Maududi as a Muslim and Hadith were more accepted then in the light of the statement of Jama'at-Islami's own senior leader Mirza Hafiz Muhammad such a person will be branded an apostate who, even according to Maududi's views, should be put to the sword.<sup>18</sup>

*Jama'at Islam* has kept track of Maulana Maududi's statements and the activities of his religious-political organisations throughout the 1950s. A collection of the articles written by *Jama'at Islam* in opposition to Maududi and Jama'at-Islami had already been published in the form of a book. An accumulation of new material has been taken out by the Jama'at-Islami since then and in retaliation the *Jama'at-Islami* planned on publishing another anti-Jama'at-Islami book. The *Jama'at-Islami* was to publish the book at its own cost but only if the government considered the publication of a book of the contemplated nature advisable and useful. The proposed book was to deal with in considerable detail Maududi's religious and political attitude toward and activities against the development of Pakistan, his ambitions after the establishment of Pakistan, the poverty of his knowledge, lack of a clear and logical general religious philosophy of the Jama'at-Islami, his attempts to gain political ends under the cloak of religion and to cheat the public in diverse ways, and so on.

On another occasion the Bureau of National Research and Reference was approached Farver and requested that his associates write against Maududism, especially in response to one of his recent articles about the righteous path trodden by the Jama'at-Islami. Farver was so content with writing a few articles to counter the influence of the Jama'at-Islami and Maududi that in a comprehensive plan to expand their influence at the government level. The Jama'at-Islami had faced better than expected during the 1955 elections and the thought of the party making further election gains prompted Farver to suggest to Ayub Khan a 'three-pronged attack' to curb the activities of Jama'at-Islami. He suggested 'exposing the personal fascist conduct of Maududi', wage an ideological war with Jama'at-Islami itself and equip the Muslim League to take on Maududism as a political movement.

Farver could estimate the benefits of a political alliance with Farver to Farver from his association with Ayub Khan. While for the latter it became a political liability, just as was the case with Fazlur Rahman,<sup>19</sup> Farver too did not escape criticism from one of the leaders of the religious quarters. Even Farver would have liked Ayub Khan to

involved. Tahir Islam's presence in the school curriculum and personally identify himself with this Quranic movement so as to further the influence of these ideas. He wrote, "It is true that our younger generation is introduced to Tahir's writings at a very early age. And this is not *impossible* only if you identify yourself with my Quranic movement, the sole object of which is to inculcate in the mind of our younger generation the habit of constructive thinking in the light of Divine guidance."<sup>10</sup> But contrary to what Tahir aspired for, he often complained about being ignored on television and radio and the fact that his publications were blacklisted in civil and military departments. His most cherished project of setting up of a Quranic College in Lahore could not materialize either, since he was almost smothered in response to a request by him for some acres of land for the purpose in Lahore. He was told, on the behalf of the President, that since land in Lahore was scarce and costly, he should raise the issue from among his supporters and the civil and purchase the land at a considerable price (the whole of part). Nevertheless, his close working relationship with the power elite certainly amplified the relevance and prominence of Tahir's Islamic revivalist and law reform writings. It was perhaps this disproportionate amplification that incensed the Ulama and drove them to declaring a *fatwa* against him. This *fatwa* was issued by approximately 100 Ulama belonging to a variety of sects. It was observed in the *fatwa* that "Purvez was the main *instigator* of all those ideas and movements that had plagued the Muslim society since the advent of British rule in South Asia." Purvez tried to argue his case, but the correspondence between him and Mufiz Shah broke down because of the antagonism shown by the latter. In vain, Purvez wrote to Ayub Khan and requested him of the Martial Law regulations prohibiting provocative writings against any Muslim sect. He expressed the fear that the Ulama may attempt to use the situation to stoke up an agitation similar to that of 1954 to gain prominence or destabilize the regime.<sup>11</sup> Purvez's worst fears in this regard never did come true.

#### 6.14. 'THE FUNDAMENTAL CONFLICT' PROJECT 1967

Attempts on the part of Ayub Khan to determine the true Islam in accordance with his own scheme of things had not been a priority when came to encourage, as long as he was firmly saddled in power, a more liberal outlook and free enquiry in the organizations for research on Islam and related subjects of interest. A related concern, whose relevance was not on par with Ayub with regard to the explicit pursuit of his agenda of

reform was the imperative of taking on the religious forces with vigour and not to give the impression of backing under their pressure. In the latter, however, he was not always successful. He could not hold on to his decision of dropping the appellation 'Islamic' from the official name of the Republic of Pakistan and had to revert back to the original one by amending the Constitution. Similarly, in a provision in the Constitution that no law shall be made in contradiction to the Quran and Sunnah—the interpretation, understanding and practice of the twin terms was left open to respective sects. This was much to the chagrin of Ayub Khan's own supporters among the Liberals and the religious circles. His efforts to remove any mention in the name of Islam on the legislative powers of the parliament also met with a similar fate. He had attempted to achieve this by a slight change of wording in the Objectives Resolution. The latter version incorporated in the 1962 Constitution as its preamble stated: 'Whereas sovereignty belongs to Allah alone, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, and the authority exercisable by the people is a sacred trust [entrusted] to the qualified Divine authority which has previously been stated in the Resolution as the terms prescribed by Allah was hence removed. The First Amendment Act, 1963 provided for the reintroduction of this qualification in the Constitution.

These trends seemed to confirm the apprehension among the power elites that the influence of the religious personnel was on the increase and that a comprehensive strategy needed to be chalked out to stave off further growth. The result of the 1965 presidential elections in which the religious parties had pooled better than expected, having received the anti-Ayub Khan vote was seen as a pretext that Ayub Khan was thinking about pitching Liberal Forces against the retrogressive ones to eliminate the forces of religious conservatism and achieve the evolutionary progress towards social welfare and *materially* *scientific* state. S.M. Zafar who was the ~~Minister~~ *Minister* during the second tenure of Ayub Khan's presidency, made an oblique reference to such growing perception among the ruling classes in a book published soon after Ayub's ouster from power. He talked about

a school of thought in our government, particularly among the services classes, according to which the establishment of a modern state in Pakistan was not possible because of the stronghold by the mullahs upon the population in Pakistan. To them there [was] a fundamental conflict between the two ideas of a modern state and the ideology of the religious exponent.

Ayub Khan himself endorsed such a reading of the Pakistani society as divided along the two antagonistic classes of 'modern educated classes and the Mullahs. He observed:

Our society is torn by a number of schisms, the most fundamental is the one which separates the educated classes from the traditional groups. It is vital that the understanding and communication between these two sections should be effected, this can come through a process of education of the Mullahs and its application to the present-day problems. Unless this happens the gulf will grow which may eventually isolate the traditional groups from the modern educated classes and alienate the latter from Islam.<sup>104</sup>

Ayub Khan wrote this as a preface to his memoirs in 1967—the same year when he approved preliminary discussions on the outline of a project entitled 'Fundamentalism: Can It Be Done?'. One of the aims of this project was to integrate the clerical classes—referred to as Mullahs throughout the proceedings of the project—with the rest of the society and introduce them to modern knowledge so that they could become productive members of society and help reduce the yawning gap between the modern educated and the religious classes.

The project was conceived by the Ministry of Information and was pushed forward by the influential bureaucrat Altaf Gauhar. The preliminary discussions to set the agenda of the project were held in a consultative Conference that was held on 23–25 February 1967 in Rawalpindi. It was accepted that Pakistan, with all the races and languages, was so different and the areas were separated by a distance of 1,200 miles. The main basis of national unity was religion. 'Pakistan unlike the western countries like Egypt and Turkey with comparatively more uniform and homogeneous social and cultural and religious groups. Now that Pakistan could not do without the traditional religious institutions as a social fabric, the dilemma before her at the advent of the confederation as it had been for the Pakistan power elite since 1947 was how to share its nation with the traditional religious community into the embrace of the progressive forces. This could not be done without taking the religious forces into account and inducing them with the power elites and that of the modern enlightened educated class, instead of a progressive Islam, the focus of the whole project. There was to highlight the dichotomy between the Mullah and the enlightened classes and suggest ways whereby the former could be converted into playing a constructive and desirable role in society. This required action on the part of the Mullah in the society at the moment, and what was

demand of him by the power elite. Even more important was a discussion on the religious ideas of the *Mullah* and how he could be influenced with modernist currents so that he came close to sharing a progressive version of Islam like the rest of the society. The idea was effectively captured in the policy statement issued by the Ministry of Information as the initiator of the project:

What we know of Islam today is nothing but customs, rituals, forms and ceremonies observed in the days of Prophet. We have therefore painted a distorted picture of Islam in which the real spirit is lacking. Today any concept is deemed inconsistent with an established practice though in accordance with the actual teachings of Quran was dubbed as anti-Islamic—*Hadat* innovation in religion and modernisation of Islam. This attitude has to be changed if the true spirit of Islam is to be revived. The chairman said that there was a gulf between the *Mullah* and the intelligentsia. Both the groups however believe that Islam presents a complete code of life. The *Mullah* wanted to make that code of life so rigid that no step could be taken unless it was in accordance with his preconceived idea and thus tried to arrest all progress and development. *It was therefore essential to restrain his influence by creating a new opinion and project Islam in a true perspective. The work of the committee was not confined to achieve the above ends.*

On an ideological plan, the various proposals and papers submitted in 1946 were offered no valid suggestion other than vaguely suggesting that the *Mullah* be modernized to a limited extent. It was a long-term goal of training a new class who have a proper knowledge of Islam and the realities of modern life.<sup>10</sup> What was deemed to be more practical in a short-term horizon was the policy of co-opting the *Mullah* who was described as living the life of a parasite and a beggar, of improving his social status and living standards.<sup>11</sup> The *Mullah* was usually employed at various tiers of the state. Demerit awards and promotion respect to salaries through the *Auqaf* department for such services as the Imam at the mosques. The *Ulama* rank among the *Mullahs* and he was won over by such steps. Those who were expected to continue with issuing inflammatory speeches on subject to government reforms. For example, those who opposed family planning were recommended to be dealt with strongly under some new provision in the penal code. This approach found endorsement from Ghulam Ahmad Parwez who himself had been hard-hit by the issuance of a decree of a ban on *agat* in the *Ulam*. He supported such measures as keeping a strict vigilance over the *Mullahs* deal their subjects with issues which are of less pragmatic



and initiation of treason proceedings against those who were guilty of transgressing the state regulations. He used the forum to highlight the perceived threat of Jamaat-i-Islami's growing influence and proposed strict controls against its operations and sources of funding. This point was further deliberated upon during the Governors Conference as it was agreed to take steps to expose the anti-Islamic character of the Jamaat-i-Islami. It was to be done by isolating it as a group of extremists exposing and attacking the Jamaat-i-Islami, or through the platform of a non-official research organization of some political party. However, none of these proposals could be effectively translated into practical measures due to brewing differences among the members of the committee themselves on the nature and utility of the concept of 'incarnational' conflict even before the project had formally taken off. SM Zafar was the one to raise a dissenting voice on this regard. His views on the project's anonymity was queried in the project team were that there did not exist a 'Jamaat-i-Islami' but only a dissonance arising between the two classes highlighted in the project. He was correct as we have noted. Fundamental conflict is a term which should be applied to describing the relations between members of the same polity (*Ummat*) but in describing those between the Muslims and the Hindus or between the Muslims and the Christians. There were at least a few preliminary sessions. The very project had to be scrapped in the face of opposition from within the committee and the possible political fallout in an already unstable situation in the country. Nevertheless, the project could a discussion about it at the conclusion of a published reading of the political Islam in Pakistan during the period 1947-92, which was a striking reminder of the power elites anxious about the role of computer interpretations of Islam during these years and the urge of its them to produce the discourse on Islamic authoritarianism to contend with their own political interests and visions. In the shaping and realization of these pre-emptual ends and versions, Ghulam Ahmad's work and thereafter the imited religious scholars and exegetes of Islam, has played a significant role.

## 6.15. CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the Ahl al-Quran ideas were not simply theological affirming of little consequence rather they had a considerable practical significance as well. It shows the great significance of the emerging leadership of Ahl al-Quran movement even if they cannot be shown to have enjoyed mass support or following. Their academic relevance

reaching its highest mark in the 1950s, assumed political significance after 1947 as the Pakistani power elites—whose own religious worldview was largely shaped by the discourse of Islamic Modernism—found it useful to employ and contend with some of the Ahl al-Qur'an scholars and their ideas for the purpose of establishing a state encompassing Islamic principles but precluding the role of the Ulama. The distinguishing feature of this approach towards Islam's role in Pakistan during the period—in congruence with some of the ideas of various Ahl al-Qur'an scholars and the proponents of Islamic Modernism—was the recognition of a distinction between the so-called 'Permanent values' of Islam and mutability of its 'Impermanent values' so as to allow for dynamism in amendment of Islamic laws and make scope for fresh legislation. A necessary corollary of disregard for the jurisprudential contributions of the scholars from the previous centuries to the Usul al-Fiqh paradigm was the inadmissibility of Islam's role in the functioning of the state and the law-making process. This dissociation from the religious and textual authority of the past allowed envisioning of a state with an avowed regard for Islamic values and its relevance as the guiding principles for the workings of the state. The chapter examines the political and ideological aspect of Pakistan's history during its formative years and the discreet role played by Ghulam Ahmad Parwez and some other Ahl al-Qur'an scholars—their ideas—in shaping some of the policies of the power elites during that period.

The politics of Islam in Pakistan after 1960 falls outside the purview of the present study. However, it needs to be pointed out that starting from early 1970s, the power elites were either unable to or stopped to pursue Islamic Modernism as their *raison d'être* for an Islamic state. Several laws were passed after seeking consultation and interpretation from the Ulama. This trend was best exemplified in the legislation declaring the Ahmadisya sect as non-Muslims in 1974. During the parliamentary debate which lasted for several weeks, prominent Ulama were invited to guide the elected representatives about the 'heresy' of the Ahmadis. Some 'cosmetic' reforms were also introduced like making Ashura a public holiday instead of Friday as the weekly holiday instead of Sunday to enforce a stricter Islamic moral code in the society based on a revised understanding of Islamic religious traditions. At the same time, the judiciary also made room for accepting Islam as the *grundnorm* of the Pakistani law and society and the very basis on which the state was created and supposed to be functioning in a manner serving justice to its people.<sup>1</sup> What transpired under General Zia-ul-Haq's regime concerning Islamisation is a different episode

altogether in the history of Pakistan – needs to be probed whether these contrasting trends gained momentum because Islamic Modernism failed to live up to the expectations of the people as a result of creating an *identity* Islamic state or due to changes in socio-political, economic and geopolitical factors and the vagaries of populist democracy in Pakistan. In this regard it would be interesting to ask whether the ideological makeup of the power elites itself underwent some transformations towards revived religious traditions or whether they simply succumbed to pressures beyond their control. It is hoped that the theoretical formulations and work in the present study would help any future research in addressing these questions, which are of significant academic and practical interest.

## NOTES

- These include Idara Tulu-i-Islam, Tulu-i-Islam Trust, The Quranic Research Centre, The Quranic Foundation for Social, Moral and Research in Education and Haqqani Tulu-i-Islam (with branches all over Pakistan and most countries of Europe, North America and other parts of the world).
- The audio-visual lectures are played at the local units of Baqar-i-Tulu-i-Islam every Sunday. As Farooq's book has not been directly uploaded but it is at <http://www.coluislam.com>. The funding for the digitization of Abu al-Qasim's work has been made by the society at all levels in Europe and North America. A survey project has been done because not many public libraries buy Farooq's work and so there was a fear that his works would be lost. The Sharif Ma'arif Ahl-e-Hadith (Chakralawi and Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Amirani) (a large name of the books of these scholars have been reprinted by Muhammad Ali Tariq at Maktaba-ul-Khushwar, Lahore). This is author's experience that even in libraries where Farooq's books have been ordered in the catalogue are missing from their location marks. This has also been the observation that many of the private collections donated to public libraries and educational institutions by intellectuals and former bureaucrats carry the copies of Farooq's writings. This gives a very rough indication about Farooq's popularity among these circles.
- Like many others discussed in this dissertation, Ghulam Ahmad Farooq too strongly objected to the term *Umm al-Qur'an* and expressed his disconnection from those who espoused these ideas.
- One prominent Pakistani journalist included Ghulam Ahmad Farooq in a list of ten most influential Pakistanis since 1947. Cf. Khurid Ahmed, 'My Personal Ten Great Pakistanis' in *Pakistan, Behind the Image of Mask* (Lahore, 2001), 243. Ahmed referred to *Asqar-i-Hadis* as a path-breaking work of Farooq (although it actually had not been published by him yet, when he wrote the book) and he was not one of Farooq's own writing – and the reason for which his name has been included as one of the ten most influential persons in the history of Pakistan was about Mawdudi in 1947. See also which Farooq himself notes which he was backing. Ghulam Ahmad Farooq, *Shahar-i-Risalat* (Lahore, 1999), 32.
- Jama'at* (New Delhi) 79: 3–5 (March–May 1982): 80.

Parwez pursued his agenda with a wide array of scholars and public intellectuals, a journal of opinion pieces and occasional polemics, and a series of pamphlets. The articles which were written mostly under the pen name of Razvi were later compiled in 1955 in the pamphlet *Chahar Mas'alah* forwarded to the prime minister. He was posthumously decorated with a medal in recognition for his services in the struggle for Pakistan. Cf. Muhammad Jinnah Daraz, ed., *Tarikh-e-Pakistan ki Mushafshahi* (Lahore: Idara-e-Tarikh-e-Pakistan, 1994), pp. 105–6. His was a self-formulated belief system, derived from a Mohammedanism and Islamism. Parwez was the administrator of the administrative set up on the new stage.

13. Interview with Fayyaz Qayyum (December 2008) Lahore.

*Jurrah* (Karachi) 34, 74.

14. Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, *Islam: Nahwunna aur Tarikh-e-Ahmadiyah* (Lahore: 2006), 4–6.

15. *Jurrah* 29, 165. Similarly in the March–April 1933 issue of *Mawrid*, Parwez had written an article in refutation of the deniers of Hadith. Muhammad Din Qasim would claim that Parwez drew upon his knowledge of the Quran, not the Hadith, to remain critical of the ideas of Ahl al-Quran and Ahl al-Madina during this period (and even afterwards) and described them as ignorant of the real sense of the Quran. He is not alone in this. Cf. *Chahar Mas'alah* (Lahore: Idara-e-Tarikh-e-Pakistan, 1955), pp. 105–6. 1942, 21–2.

16. The title of *Tahrir-e-Islam* used to carry Quranic verses emphasizing the obedience to the central Muslim authority.

17. *Tahrir-e-Islam* (Lahore) November 1938, 35–33. In a statement similar to that of Ahmad al-Hanafi, he said that the sect of Muslim scholars would never be able to understand the Quran and the meaning of the Quran. He said that the Quran is a book which is beyond the power of the human mind to understand. Cf. *Tahrir-e-Islam* (Lahore) November 1938, 35–33.

18. *Tahrir-e-Islam* (Lahore), August 1940, 3–4. Parwez summed up his doctrine on Hadith in an article published in June 1942 which was more or less a repetition of the same ideas with an addition that he was a Muslim. Cf. *Tahrir-e-Islam* (Lahore) June 1942, 3–5. Amirul took note of this article as well. *Ahl-e-Hadith*, Amirul, 8 October 1942, 3–5.

19. For more details of these incidents regarding the internal periodicals, see Mustafa Qasbi, *The Islamic Movement in the Punjab under the British and the Muslim League in India and Pakistan* (Routledge, 2006).

20. Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, *Islam: A Challenge to Religion* (Lahore, 1996), 77. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857–1954* (London, 1967), 224.

21. The whole project of researching and writing the book was carried out mostly by Parwez himself. In addition, he had a dedicated team of research assistants well-versed in the Arabic language to aid him in this gigantic task. This included the figure of Umar Ahmad Usmani as well, who was the son of one of the most important scholars in Pakistan. As for the book, it was a long and difficult work. Parwez wanted a friend & preview of the manuscript before putting it for publication. He asked for advice from legendary Urdu scholars of the time, some of them died and some of them were busy with their services and he was not able to get the part of such a 'heresy'. Cf. *Jurrah* 29, 165–7. In the end, Jafar Shah Phulwari offered some help and was able to read through some portions of the lexicon. *Tahrir-e-Islam* (Lahore), July 2005, 11–22.

- Imad, whose a detailed critique on it part of which was published. CE *Faraz* (Lahore 1991) 210-211. In the introduction to the Urdu edition, Faraz was concerned with the task of translating the expression into English found some of his Urdu words to be untranslatable. Interview with General Miraj-ul-Rahman Islamabad, January 2006.
20. Chaudhri Ahmad Faraz, *Musallim Faraz* (Lahore, 2003), 83-4.
21. Faraz, *Lughat* 400.
22. Chaudhri Ahmad Faraz, *Musallim Faraz* (Lahore, 2003), III, 360-2.
23. Faraz, *Lughat* 400.
24. Faraz, *Lughat* 400.
25. Faraz, *Lughat* 400.
26. Chaudhri Ahmad Faraz, *Adab aur Khudai* (Lahore 1991), 2-9. This introductory summation of the ideas expressed by Faraz in the original edition as well.
27. Faraz, *Lughat* 400.
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- story of Adam was not about the origin of universe or mankind but simply about a decisive phase in the evolution of human species to a higher plane. Parwez, *Iblis wa Adam* (Lahore, 2004), 48.
27. Parwez asserts that the anthropologists concur in the existence of an initial stage of material rudiment, *ibid.*, 51.
28. *Ibid.*, 52.
29. The English equivalent for the term *Nizam-i-Rububiyyat* has been taken from Sheila McDonough, *An Ideology for Pakistan: A Study of the Works of Chulian Ahmad Parwez* (Ph.D. thesis McGill University, Montreal, 1984). Parwez defines the concept behind this system in these words: 'to gradually assist to a particular thing from its point of origin to its highest form and to nourish it all this while to a certain point is called *Rububiya* and he who accomplishes it is called *Rabb*. After see *Qasidat*, 21.
30. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, 228.
31. Parwez expressed such view with much vigour after 1947. For a considerable period in his intellectual career, Parwez had remained a proponent of private property. Muhammad 'in *Islam: Ibtidai Ahkam* (Islamic Norms Parwez ke Nizam-i-Rububiyyat par ek Nazar) (Lahore, 2007), 70-7. For the Quranic edicts regarding the settlement of property issues, Parwez held out the explanation that these were meant for the transitional period when capitalism was not yet completely eradicated. Parwez, *Nizam-i-Rububiyyat* (Lahore, 1995), 27.
32. Parwez, *Challenge to Religion*, 226.
33. *Ibid.*, 248.
34. Parwez, *Quran ka Muasher Nizam* (Lahore, n.d.), 3.
35. Parwez, *Khuda aur Sarfrazgirdar* (Lahore, 1956), 56.
36. Parwez opined that in certain aspects Communism is even worse than Capitalism. It was because in it neither the labourer has at least the theoretical possibility of swathing his job if he was not satisfied with remuneration offered to him. Such a possibility did not exist in Communism where all the factors of production were to be owned by the state and the labourer forced to offer his services for whoever was offered to him. Parwez, *Jahann Miya Nizam reh Gaya* (Lahore, ca. 2000), 40.
37. *Ibid.*, 49.
38. Parwez, *Challenge to Religion*, 229.
39. For that and other services rendered for the benefit of mankind, Parwez gave the title of *Al-Nazif: Insaniyyat* (Eminent of Human) and *Shahkar-i-Risalat* (Prophet's Masterpiece) in his biographies of Prophet Muhammad (saw) and Umar respectively. However, he acknowledged that the historical resources might be lacking in evidence supporting the existence of *Nizam-i-Rububiyyat* but that it was more because the retrogressive forces removed all the traces of past so as to engender the same old system of dictatorial rule and priesthood. In this scenario Quran offered the most authentic source of information acceptable as all as the most preferable source of history. *Shahkar-i-Risalat*, 52-3.
40. Parwez, *Insaniyyat ka Ahlaq-i-Nabawi* (Lahore, 1984), 27. On the basis of this idea Parwez always tried to distance himself and his organization from other Ahl-ul-Quran groups—especially the Lahore-based journal *Bulagh-ul-Quran*. The latter, however, insisted on its ideological uniformity with *Talim-i-Islam* and borrowed many of Parwez's terminologies—like *Nizam-i-Rububiyyat*—in their own writings.
41. In an answer to a query, *Talim-i-Islam* explained its doctrine of Hadith by giving an example: it said that the Ahadith reported about Prophet's administration of justice but it added little to our knowledge since Quran itself had repeatedly enjoined upon

the believers to be steadfast in justice. Finally, if there were problems in ascertaining the authenticity of Hadith on non-Isma'ili basis. For example if Prophet found the rate of Zakat at 2.4 per cent during his lifetime, how could it be asserted that whether the Hadith is a genuine one was authentic or not? *Tulu' al-Islam* (Karachi) November 1952: 64–5. Thus, 'theoretically', *Tulu' al-Islam* was right in claiming that they were not. Much to the credit of the fact that they had no problems in accepting and using sayings of the Prophet as long as they were in conformity with *Qur'an* and did not harm the *Ummah* or cause any damage to the prestige of the Prophet. Cf. Idara Tulu' al-Islam *Al-Sunnah wa'l-Hadith* (Lahore: ca. 1946).<sup>42</sup> But this recognition on how pure remained the *Qur'an* for they did not mean that the Prophet's sayings established as authentic had a binding authority for the Muslims of every period.

- 42 *Tulu' al-Islam* (Lahore), July 2005: 38–40.
- 43 In an article, Parwez criticised in detail all those Ahl al-Qur'an groups and individuals practicing *Qur'anic Nazam* (Lahore: *Al-Nazam*), August 1976: 57–61.
- 44 Parwez, *Qur'an al-Quranif* (Lahore: 1908): 33.
- 45 *Tulu' al-Islam* (Delhi), June 1942: 2.
- 46 *Tulu' al-Islam* (Karachi), July 1948: 29–30.
- 47 *Tulu' al-Islam* (Karachi), November 1948: 21–4.
- 48 Parwez, *Qur'an al-Quranif* I, 33.
- 49 In the context of South Asia, the Persian word of *Namaz* is generally used as a replacement for the English word in the Muslim way. Parwez had objections to its use because it according to him helped no learning. He Muslims a spiritual formalism and lack of appreciation for the more practical aspects of an all-encompassing concept of *Salat*.
- 50 Parwez, *Lughat*, 1041: 2.
- 51 Jalal Shab-i-Shahwarani had also adopted Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din Arifzari's view of *Hajj* as a grand conference. It was described by him as a forum which allowed the Muslims to extend exchange on various technical fields of politics, science and trade. Phuwarai, *Guilan-i-Hadith* (Lahore), 2005: 42.
- 52 *Matalib al-Furqan*, III, 240.
- 53 *Tulu' al-Islam* (Karachi), August 1951: 69.
- 54 Parwez, *Al-Nazam* (unpubl.), 357.
- 55 In the early 1950s, Parwez wrote popular articles in a number of newspapers. Parwez was a young man with a brilliant personality who was about various aspects of Islamic teachings owing to his education background and exposure to Western notions of enlightenment and liberalism. Cf. Parwez *Tulu' al-Islam* (Lahore: 1948–50), 3 vols. Similar efforts were made by one anti-Parwez scholar Muztar Abbas Abbadi who wrote letters to Aslam—a fictional young man distracted from the right path by the writings of Parwez. Cf. Abbasi, *Aslam* (Lahore, n.d.). Parwez wrote a similar series of letters to an imagined young woman named Talia. Cf. *Talia* (Lahore: 2001). However, it should also be noted that Parwez had a mother-in-law named a woman named Talia who was regarded by him as his beloved daughter. Parwez did not have a daughter of his own. Parwez was a single individual living in impoverished conditions next to the central office of Idara Tulu' al-Islam in the push locality of Gullberg, Lahore.
- 56 For the role and attitude of Nationalist Ulama towards the Pakistan movement of Zia-ul-Hasan Farugi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan* (Bombay: 1943); Sahabzada Ismail Khan, 'The Attitude of the Ahl-i-Sunnat & Jama'at Hind to the Indian National Movement and to the Establishment of Pakistan', *Asian and African*

- Smith 7 (1973): 197–80. For Maududi's stance on Pakistan, cf. Sayyid Yahiya Khan, *The Language of the Future: Islamism and the Politics of a New Ideology* (Berkeley, 1994): 103–5.
- 5 The state was neither a purely secular state nor did it adopt Islam as its religion. Instead, a proclamation was made in the affirmation of a single God, to make his name the basis upon which the nation was to be constructed. *Islam and the Ideology of Islamism* (London, 1995): 11–12.
  - 56 In *Islam in South Asia and Middle East: A Comparative Approach to Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey* (Westport, Connecticut, 1994).
  - 57 This work is a translation of a book by Shauq Ali Khan, *The Contents of an Islamic State: An Analysis of the Ideological Controversy in Pakistan* (London, 1987).
  - 60 While approaching the state of modernity, Smith argues that there can be no precise definition of an Islamic state. There can be different ideas about what constitutes an Islamic state and variety of opinions as to how to bring about its establishment.
  - 61 This project can be described as Islamisation, but it is not a project in a narrow connotation. It is understood as referring to the drift towards a theological state based on revived religious traditions on closer study of religious doctrines, encoded by scholars of westerners in the form of Sharia.
  - 62 Not by announcing the Islamic character of the state the religious forces had been deprived the chance of manipulating the power elites for failing to implement the 'Ideology of Pakistan' was offered as an explanation during the proceedings of a confidential project titled 'The Fundamental Conflict' detailing the clash between the 'enlightened' and 'retrogressive' forces. The project has been discussed at greater detail later in this chapter.
  - 63 Khalid B. Sayeed, *Pakistan: The Future and Direction of Change* (New York, 1980): 28.
  - 64 Muhammad Waseem, *Politics and the State in Pakistan* (Ishraq, 1989), especially the first two chapters.
  - 65 Asad Husain, *From Politics to an Ideological State: The Case of Pakistan* (Folkstone, 1979), especially chapter 1.
  - 66 Sitara Tahira Khatt, 'Pakistan: Issues and Foreign Policy Towards the Soviet Union, Iran and Afghanistan', PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1972: 3.
  - 67 Ibid., 66 and 153. The ascendancy of such figures like Chaudhri Muhammad Ishaq and Chaudhri Muhammad Ali to positions of Governor General and Prime Minister in the 1970s testifies to the importance of bureaucratic elite in the power structure of Pakistan.
  - 68 For an overview of the religious worldview of Pakistan's military elite, cf. Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army* (Berkeley, 1984).
  - 69 Jamal Malik, *Islamization of Islam: Discussion of Traditional Institutions in Pakistan* (New Delhi, 1996): 5.
- Smith *Islam in Modern History*, 224–6.
- For a definition of Islamic modernism, cf. Introduction. The key figures associated with Islamic modernism and their ideas about various aspects of Islam have already been detailed in Chapter 3.
- 72 Sayyid Yahiya Khan and Asad Husain, *Islam and the Ideology of Islamism* (London, 1995): 37.
  - 73 Sayyid Yahiya Khan and Asad Husain, *Islam and Modernization*, 76–7.



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expressed him as a proponent of Islamic modernism. Interview with Muhammad Afzal Qasbi, December 2007, Lahore.

91. Farhat Ishtiyaz, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an 'Orthodox' Tradition* (Lahore, 1992). Ishtiyaz felt that Ahnori has also downplayed the establishment of Islamism in Islamic states as an effort to establish a new expression of Islamic revivalism. Abbott, *Islam and Pakistan* (Ithaca, 1968), 203–4.
92. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, *Ma'arifi Islamic Ideology: Its Fundamental Beliefs and Principles of Islam and their Application to Practical Life* (Lahore, 1961), 242–3. In that period, the Institute was not just to present Islam with a liberal face to counteract the influence of Ulama but was also to highlight the progressive aspect of Islam's economic commandments so as to present it as a viable replacement for and also anathetical to, the Communist ideology. Khalifa wrote 'An Islamic State would neither be a totalitarian nor a laissez-faire state. The State would leave the individuals free to pursue their individual goals but would not allow a society where these goals tend to produce an economic or social chaos. I must repeat here that no Muslim country is a lover of Russian Communism, because the latter is atheistic and brutally tyrannical, while every Muslim nation believes in the truth of Islam and considers it as the purpose of all life. Khalifa Abdul Hakim, *Islam and Communism* (Lahore, 1962), 139 and 326. In their opposition to Communism both the Ulama and the Islamic modernists seemed to share a common ground and were not averse to receiving patronage from state and external sources. According to Aynisha Jalal, the Jamiat Ulema Islam sought financial aid (Rs 10,000) to 'help meet their costs in promulgating the anti-Communist line as well as Urdu pamphlets on the 'treatment of Muslims in Russia to demonstrate how Islam ... [was] being crushed under the Communist system' (Jalal, *The State of Marmat Rule: The Origins of Pakistan's Political Economy of Defence* (Cambridge, 1990), 19).
93. Abdul Hakim, *Islamic Ideology*, 283.
94. This is not to say that there were no 'conservative' Islamic scholars in the Institute. Ra'is Ahmad Jafar and Hanif Nadwi were also among the institute's research fellows although their contributions during the 1950s published by the Institute fell considerably short of the traditional stance about the powers of the legislation in an Islamic state and that of Islamic Leviathan proposed by Maududi. This is the impression that can be gathered from works like Ra'is Ahmad Jafar's *Siyaasat-e-Shariyya* (1959) and Nadwi's *Masalat-e-Ijtihad* (1961) in which the traditionally agreed findings about state authority, free thinking and fresh regulations have been put across and argued about in a rather mild tone.
95. *Al-Bayan* (Lahore) 2, 4 (December 1950): 11–2.
96. Fakhkar Ahmad Balkhi, *Pitna-i-Jahar-i-Hadith bi Manzar wa pa Manzar* (Karachi, 1955), 112–4.
97. In early 1940s, when Jafar Shah proposed a limited ban on polygamy, one of the reasons for which Jafar Shah proposed a limited ban on polygamy was that it would help control the population growth as well. His proposals carried favour with members of women activists like Begum Shaukat Ikramullah and Salim Tasaddiq Husayn as well. The latter had submitted similar proposals in a legislative draft in 1954 calling upon modifications in various aspects of twenty laws in the spirit of Quranic injunctions. For Ulama's response to her proposals, cf. Aunisa Ahsan, *Madhurat-e-Arba'at* (Lahore, 2004), 111–14–20.
98. Jafar Shah has enlarged the scope of legislative authority on the rationale that the Islamic Shariat is not permanent and is open to revision, in case there was a consensus



12. Malik, *Colonization of Islam*, 39.
13. Munir Ahmad, 'Islam and the State', 244. The Awqaf department took many initiatives in this regard. New and attractive pay scales were introduced for the prayer leaders at the mosques. In the central mosque an Egyptian scholar was engaged to set up an academy for training the Ulama where they were taught courses in history, geography and politics of Pakistan, international affairs, problems of economic development and about unity and harmony among the Muslim sects. Ibid., 245. During the deliberation of The Fundamental Committee, committee proposals were floated for an enhanced role of the Awqaf department towards increasing the economic and social stature of the Ulama.
14. For details of Muhammad Khalid Masud, 'A mosque and its jurisdiction: Rural India', in David S. Powers, Brinkley Messick and Muhammad Khalid Masud eds. *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Mujtahids and Their Fatwas* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: 1996), 192-203. Reportedly, Maulana Maududi, in view the peculiar conditions of women in British India, did not find objectionable the idea of putting restrictions on the practice of polygamy. Rafi Ullah Shahab, *Abdullah-Qur'an men Tehrik* (Lahore: 2009), 88.
15. With regard to the role of women and their status, the wife of the first Prime Minister of Pakistan, Begum Ra'na Liaqat Ali Khan, frequently spoke about the rights and freedoms granted to women by Islam and argued for 'a greater contribution in the social and economic life of the country. Her efforts—and that of other elite Begums—and statements against purdah and other women-discriminatory laws, practices and customs, invited a hostile reaction from conservative quarters. Amir Ahsan Ali, who at the time was an important member of the Jama'at-i-Islami, wrote a rejoinder to the calls for greater women participation and laid down the Islamic guidelines for women, the duties assigned to her and the rights reserved for her. See also: *Islami Maqasid men Azad ke Maqasid* (Lahore: n.p.), 300.
16. Women also organized a number of demonstrations. They carried placards with slogans reading: 'Down with Polygamy', 'Yes Back Alga Suddi' and 'You Should Marry A Bachelor' and other slogans of women groups. Cf. Sylvia A. Chipp, 'The Role of Women Elites in a Modernizing Country', PhD Thesis, University of Syracuse, 1970, 2.
17. Muhammad Phulsham-ul-Haq, Thanawi was the only member to the commission who was trained in traditional scholarship of Islam. The so-called non-specialists' reply to draft this report was defended by Khulisa Abdul Hakim in one of his articles published by Idara Saqafat-i-Islamiyya, Jafar Shab Phulsham ul-Haq ed. *Mas'ala-i-Ta'limiyya* (Lahore: 1959), 36.
18. Ebrahima-ul-Haq Thanawi, *Al-Fa'iqatun dar Tafsir*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Idara-ul-Haq, Jamia Karachi, 2007, 42. Ahsan Ali Ebrahima ul-Haq was the only member to write a dissenting note. He criticized the Commission's understanding of jihad whereby changes had been introduced in the established practices of the Muslims. He noted various Western influences on the members of the commission and their opposition to polygamy.
19. What facilitated the women further was the promulgation of West Pakistan Family Courts Act in 1964 which eased the matters relating to matrimonial litigation. Sylvia A. Chipp, 'The Role of Women Elites', 187.
20. Ayeshah Jaleel, 'Influence of Subversive Women and the State in Pakistan', in Tahir Kamran ed. *Women, Islam and the State* (Basingstoke: 2001), 94. In his criticism of the Family Laws, Murtaza Ali, the chief clerk of Parliament in Pakistan, mentioned that the 'prevalent' of marrying local elite Alga Suddi.

outlined by the present laws. This was stated in a detailed letter written by Mulla Nauffi to Ayub Khan about whom he regarded as the anti-Islamic provisions of the laws. The letter was M.H. the president of the Muslim League (Karachi), ca. March-April 1963. The presidency sent this letter of objection to the law. The letter was signed by Mulla Nauffi and was a copy of the letter sent to Ayub Khan. 28 April 1963. (Estimated, G.P.P.)

- [illegible]









- the new book was opposed to his plan for the government. Parwez to Ayub Khan, 14 May 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*. Parwez was also active in securing property rights was published by Idara Tulu'-i-Islam in June 1962.
55. A report of the National Council of Islamic Research and Reference to Parwez, 3 June 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*.
56. The proposals titled as Measures to Curb the Activities of Jama'at-e-Islami, was submitted to the government in 1965. Parwez to Ayub Khan, 14 May 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*.
57. Parwez, too, was aware of that. In a letter to Ayub Khan, written probably after September 1968, Parwez admitted that the opposition might target Ayub for his association with Parwez. Parwez to Ayub Khan, 14 May 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*.
58. Parwez to Ayub Khan, 5 February 1965, Lahore, *GAPP* (emphasis added). The idea of distributing Tulu'-i-Islam literature through the platform of Muslim League was discussed between the two for a brief while. Ayub Khan had offered to speak to Nawabzada Abdul Ghafoor Khan of Muslim League in this regard. Parwez to Ayub, 24 November 1967, Lahore, *GAPP*.
59. S. Fida Hassan to Parwez, 5 August 1966, Islamabad, *GAPP* No.D 134-Pr/66. In 1967 a Quaranic Education Society set up by the Tulu'-i-Islam approached the Board to request them for allocation of 50 acres of government land for the construction of a Quranic College. The land was finally acquired in the late 1970s and the Quranic College was established. The proposed college, however, could not be built as the stakeholders lost interest after the death of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez.
60. Parwez ke bare mein *Ulama in Afghanistan Pakistan* (Kabul, ca. 1961).
61. Parwez to Ayub Khan, 13 March 1962, Lahore, *GAPP*. All these concerns were unfounded. There has never been a serious demand or an effort on the part of Ulama to ban the literature of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez. The closest Pakistani religious affairs minister Raja Zafar ul-Haq asked the advice and opinion of Ulama about the status of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez and his followers as Muslims. Rehman to Parwez, 14 May 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*. A campaign was launched as part of a strategy to remove General Parwez Musharraf from his position on account of his religious affiliations stamped as un-Islamic by the state. Interview with Munir Qasim, December 2007.
62. Martin Lau, *The Role of Islam in the Legal System of Pakistan* (London, 2006) p. 7 fn.
63. A report of the National Council of Islamic Research and Reference to Parwez, 3 June 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*. The report was also active in securing property rights was published by Idara Tulu'-i-Islam in June 1962. The proposals titled as Measures to Curb the Activities of Jama'at-e-Islami, was submitted to the government in 1965. Parwez to Ayub Khan, 14 May 1965, Islamabad, *GAPP*.
64. Ayub Khan, *Friends and Masters*, ix. (emphasis added).

- 65 Interview with S.M. Zafar, 18 January 2008, Lahore.
66. Minutes of the Governors Conference 23–25 February, 1967. Minutes, Case No. GC8.1167, GAPP 2. This preliminary meeting was attended by the Ministers of Information, Foreign Affairs and Law along with important members of the government machinery like Qudus Ullah Shahid, Arafat Usman and Farid Rahman. Chaudhri Ahmad Parwez was especially invited and inducted as a non-official member of this project.
- 67 Committee on Fundamental Conflict: 17 April 1967, GAPP 2–3 (emphasis added).
- 68 Minutes, GAPP 4.
- 69 Ibid. 2.
70. Ibid. 4–5. A paper titled 'Making the Mullah Useful in the Process of Nation Building' with the sub-heading 'Winning Over or Neutralizing the Lie-Bard Section of the Mullah' was circulated among the members of the project for the Fundamental Conflict. The paper, which had probably been written by Dr Faidur Rahman, gave similar suggestions regarding the co-optation of Mullahs.
  - \* This was stated in Chaudhri Ahmad Parwez's article titled 'Fundamental Conflict' which was distributed among the members of the committee for their perusal. Parwez, 'Fundamental Conflict', GAPP, 28.
71. Summary for the Governor's Conference: The Fundamental Conflict, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GAPP, 4.
72. Committee on Fundamental Conflict, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 17 April 1967, GAPP, 7. S.M. Zafar told the author that his stance was supported by most of the others present during the session. He was appreciated for boldly challenging the parameters of the project by the then Governor of West Pakistan Nawab Malik Asrar Muhammad Khan of Rawalpindi. Interview with S.M. Zafar, 18 January 2008, Lahore. Zafar believes that the members of the Fundamental Conflict did not take the scrapping up of the project too kindly. In order to emphasize their point in favour of taking on the Mullahs, they did not take sufficient steps to quell the agitations against Dr Faidur Rahman and allowed it to reach a level where there was no left no option for Rahman but to resign. S.M. Zafar, *Through the Crisis*, 25–6.
73. Martin Lau remarks: The paucity of reported cases involving an explicit recognition of Islam as an additional source of law indicates that in the 1950s and 1960s judges were still able and willing to reject any express reliance on Islamic law. The areas of law occupied by Islamic law were confined to family law, which had continued to be governed by the British Indian system of personal laws. Lau, *The Role of Islam*, 1.

## Concluding Remarks

The purpose of the present study has been to offer an insight into the hitherto unexplored history of the Ahl al-Qur'an groups and their contributions to the discourse on South Asian Islam on modernity, reform, rationality, individual self and other related themes. By foregrounding the theorization on the *Isnad* paradigm, the study has shown how the authority of the past has been negotiated with and for what ends. In case of the former objective, the responses on the part of the Ahl al-Qur'an scholars have been shown to vary from an absolute severance of historical connectivity—and hence a concomitant discarding of the vast corpus of Islamic literature on jurisprudence and religious guidance in the form of *Hadith*, *Tafsir* and *Fiqh*—to attempts on their part to construct a discursive space allowing possible questioning, revisioning and limiting of the sources of authority derived from the past. However, the authority of the past most contested is that of the Prophet and his words and actions as recorded in *Hadith* collections. While the question of Prophet's authority and authenticity of *Hadith* literature is a settled one for the proponents of *Hadith*, the Ahl al-Qur'an seek to reappraise the notion of whether the Prophet had—in the first place—any authority outside that of the strict precursors of the Quran and whether *Hadith* or *Sunnat* are authentic means and reliable vehicles of its transmission for authoritatively defining the beliefs and determining the practices of the present-day Muslims.

An inevitably related concern has been to ascertain the relative significance of the Quran and *Hadith* as the sources for Islamic religious traditions. The consideration of these postulates has been the differentiating line between the various Ahl al-Qur'an groups and scholars and the other Muslim sects and *Ulama*. Among Ahl al-Qur'an themselves the groups and individuals are distinctly demarcated from one another on the basis of their respective approaches to these questions. The diversity

of approaches attending to the resolution of questions central to the thematic and doctrinal concerns of Ahl al-Qur'ān has been one of the primary issues focused upon in this study. For this purpose the writings and the historical context in which they originated—of Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Maulwi Abdulqādir Cāzizālāwī, Khwāja Ahmad-ud-Dīn Asadī sar, Asām Jayrapūrī, and Ghulam Ahmad Parwez, along with many others espousing similar intellectual trends, have been discussed.

The study has shown that Sayyid Ahmad Khan primarily laid down a criterion based on content analysis to sift authentic traditions from fabricated ones; did not come to a conclusion, promising an outright rejection of the whole corpus of Hadith and limitation of the Prophet's role and authority in dictating the terms of strictly religious beliefs and practices. Maulwi Abdulqādir Cāzizālāwī, on the other hand, thought of the Prophet as entrusted with the task of relaying the Divine message. Only Maulwi Abdulqādir, and those like Mistrī Muhammad Rāmāzān who followed his line, had a peculiar view about the comprehensiveness of the Qur'an as a Divine code encompassing all the aspects of religious life including ritual observances. Khwāja Ahmad-ud-Dīn Asadī sar expressed similar views on the Hadith records, the Prophet's authority and his humanness but did not find fault with the prevalent modes of ritual observances—whether Sunnat based or inferred purely from the Qur'an—more recently by Maulwi Abdulqādir. For him the external form—the mode of worship—mattered far less. Asām Jayrapūrī offered a compromise between contrasting trends of thought within the Ahl al-Qur'ān by remaining sceptical of Hadith and restraining the authority of the Prophet in most of the affairs while acknowledging the continuation of prevalent ritual practices on the account of their consonance with the continuous practice of the Ummah for centuries. But however, for example Ghulam Ahmad Parwez did not rule out the possibility of revision of these practices even though in many of his other writings on Hadith, Prophet and the Qur'an, Parwez did not deviate—on greatly—from the ideas propounded by Asām Jayrapūrī. There were others among the Ahl al-Qur'ān like Tāyibnā Imādī and to a lesser extent Jafar Shāh Mīrwarī, who tended to be of the hinges of pro-Hadith group or Ulama but could still be classified under the category of Ahl al-Qur'ān who were far accepting or reservedly the arbitration of the Qur'an in the ascertaining of authentic traditions—carrying out an intensive scrutiny of Hadith literature on the basis of sound questioning, a critical bibliography of previously undisputed scholars of Hadith as Shāhab Zubrī, and refusing to accept a large number of traditions which are commonly accepted by

the vast majority of Ulama and are relevant to detailing important aspects of Muslim faith and history.

The consequences were idled and those accruing inadvertently from the promulgation of these revisionist approaches by different Ahl al-Qur'an groups and individual scholars exhibit a similar variety. Sayyid Ahmad Khan's main purpose was to shield the reputation of the Prophet from the mounting remarks being made against his personage on the basis of Hadith and Sira literature. Biographies penned by the Orientalists. These writings were influential upon the religious worldview of the swelling ranks of college-educated Muslim middle classes and the literati in North India. Maabul Ahle Ahl-e-Chairanaw was less concerned with highlighting the objectionable content of the Hadith literature and more inclined towards elevating the reputation of the Quran as the only and the most comprehensive embodiment of Divine guidance pertaining to all spheres of life and religious dogmas. As for Mirza Asadullah Khan, the enormous intellectual expanse that was his, the project of charting a universal religion in which reverence for a single Prophet held little significance. The ideas propounded by Ghulam Ahmad, however, inspired his followers to set in motion a project that were meant to strengthen the role of the state in a civilisation's Muslim society by utilising the influence of aggressive religious states detesting their key image from the broad paradigm. Likewise, Jamunna Ahmad and Jafar Nisar Phulwarvi—who were relatively closer to the traditional stance on Hadith than the other Ahl al-Qur'an scholars—sought a new role for legislation in Islam and the positive reversioning of the late prudential work of the past.

Further, in his way of disseminating his sought and desired array of approaches adopted for their revision, one might deduce a unique new dimension to the emerging discourse on reform in South Asian Islam. The discourse was still being carried on via traditional literary reports and becoming increasingly important for the younger sections of the Muslim population. The revisionist discourse has been spreading from the Deccan and West India to the rest of the world, where it is being opened up within the framework specified by their preferred predecessors.

## 7.1. RECENT TRENDS AMONG THE AHL AL-QUR'AN MOVEMENTS

In order for the Ahl al-Qur'an trends to gain wider success, it has not been less upon its recent movements that continue to diverge and sece-

Prophet, his authority and the record of his words, sayings and actions in the form of Hadith invokes a negative reaction. However, there still continue to exist remnants of those Ahl al-Quran groups that espouse ideas in the mould of Abdallah Chugataw, i.e. Quran-only ideas. The non-acceptability of these ideas and their ideologues among the large sections of Muslims population is evidenced by the marginalization of the Ahl al-Quran groups upholding them.

### 7.1.1. IDARA BALAGH-UL-QUR'AN

One prominent example is that of Idara Balagh-ul-Quran. The group and its journal was initially started by Mister Muhammad Ramazan in 1920s. The journal renewed its publication in 1955 under the editorship of Rafiq Hussain Mirhammad Ishtiaq (1915-82) and the assistance of Mister Muhammad Ali Raza Nigari (1902-82). Since then the journal has been an continuous publication under different editorial set-ups. The group maintains a small mosque in Lahore where weekly gatherings are held on Friday and Quranic Narratives are recited in accordance with the one laid down by Muhammad Ramazan several decades ago. Balagh-ul-Quran has also set up a Quranic Board of Idara which is responsible for writing the contentary of Quran. The number of Balagh-ul-Quran followers does not exceed a few dozen. But it is not an offshoot of other groups with a similar religious outlooks for the fact that it has its own mosque and has been able to publish its journal on a regular basis.<sup>4</sup>

### 7.1.2. OTHER AHL AL-QUR'AN GROUPS

Smaller Ahl al-Quran groups, other than Balagh-ul-Quran, have little institutional set-up and organizational resources at their disposal. They include Hlab ul-Mushannin,<sup>5</sup> Tehrik ul-Tamir-e-Insaniyyat,<sup>6</sup> Anjuman Ittifaq ul-Uloom, Markaz Ithfaq ul-Uloom,<sup>7</sup> and various others and scholars. What is common to these organizations is that their membership is limited almost to their respective parts alone and the marginality of their views excludes them from bearing any impact on the discourse of Islam. The latter, however, have not been considered worthy of a serious response by the proponents of Hadith. Apart from these there are a number of individuals and groups based in Europe and North America which cherish similar ideas but do not necessarily trace their links to the Ahl al-Quran figures discussed in this study.

### 7.1.3. RAUF ULLAH SHAHAB

Some of Ghulam Ahmad Parwez's colleagues and aides at Iqbal Islamic continued with his ideas albeit with some attenuation. Rauf Ullah Shahab—a former professor of Arabic at Government College University Lahore—is one such example. Shahab worked for Parwez's Iqbal Islamic and contributed many articles especially against Maulana Maududi and Jamaat-e-Islami.<sup>1</sup> In his other works published after the death of Parwez, Rauf Ullah Shahab did not renege the efforts for the explication of Parwez's ideas of Islamic state and socio-economic order. He simply limited himself to offering the Quranic perspective on various issues—most importantly women's rights, as can be seen in many of his writings for Urdu journals and English dailies—and indexing to jurisprudential injunctions.<sup>2</sup> In pursuance of the latter theme, Shahab emphasized the sufficiency of Quranic text in matters of basic jurisprudential guidelines so as to reiterate the importance of non-Islamic sources of guidance. But for that he did not resolve the disharmonies of the past altogether; rather he quoted from various Ahadith, exceptional contexts and jurisprudential findings of classical scholars to justify the reading and interpretation of particular Quranic verses in ways that were in consonance with his own productions—especially on the issues of women's right free thinking, slavery, war, socio-economic justice and so on—and purportedly in compatibility with Quran.

### 7.1.4. 'UMAR AHMAD 'USMANI

A similar but more comprehensive effort in this regard has been made by 'Umar Ahmad 'Usmani. His *Revolutionary Interpretation of Quranic Jurisprudence* (1994) was a major achievement of Parwez's team of scholars. His scholarly credentials and training in traditional Islamic sciences from reputed seminaries could give aside the fact that he was a convert to Islam in 1960 and a convert to Islam is not a desirable trait in his work as a convert to Ahl al-Quran. His father Zafar Ahmad 'Usmani was a renowned Deobandi scholar whose *Mughniyah* (1967) was a massive 21-volume commentary on various aspects of Fiqh Hanafi and Shafi'i—Ahl al-Ahli Thanawi, the head of Deoband's website has held a major Ahmad 'Usmani's *Mughniyah* a *qur'ani* text and a *qur'ani* text. In 1993, 'Umar Ahmad 'Usmani attended Quranic lectures offered by Asam Jajjaj in Delhi where he was a student during that period. This introduced him to Jajjaj's various views on Ahl al-Quran concepts and gave him a chance to interact with Ghulam Ahmad Parwez. Parwez and 'Usmani maintained

contact through correspondence over the subsequent years. Usmani respected Parwez as a learned scholar and was in agreement with him on several of his views but he did have his reservations over some, and outrightly disagreed with some.<sup>1</sup> After 1947 as Tulu-i-Islam was established and a certain amount of financial security Parwez succeeded in convincing Usmani to give up his teaching job in East Bengal and work for the journal. Later during his career Usmani joined a local college in Karachi and during the last few years of his life busied himself with writing the volumes of *Fiqh al-Qur'an*.

The principles enumerated by Usmani for the compilation of Qur'anic jurisprudence were not dissimilar from those propounded by Rabi' al-Lah Shabab. He saw little incompatibility between most of the jurisprudence, a guidance offered by the Qur'an and that derived from Hadith and confined in the form of Fiqh. Wherever such an incongruity was to be found, Usmani conveniently ignored the Hadith and the Fiqh in the favour of the Qur'an. But most significant was with relation to details of ritual practices. Parwez had deviated considerably from traditional practice on Hadith and Fiqh and drew himself closer to the most controversial of Ahl al-Qur'an figures such as Muhiy al-Din Yahya al-Khawwarizmi. This is clearly evident in Usmani's writings on the prayer rituals. He accepted the prevalent mode of ritual observances as far as conformity with the Sunnah. Moreover he proceeded to furnish supplementary evidence from the Qur'an to drive home the point that herophe was determining the various postures and recitations for Namaz exercised in personal devotion as yet to differing such details in various Qur'anic verses. So even if the prayer had made for Namaz had a divine sanction it did not mean that it was based on a source of guidance whose content was exclusive to the interpreter alone. He noted that the various ritual postures prescribed for Namaz had been stressed upon in the Qur'an in different parts of the text. It was only that they were not put in sequential order. But in the case of the bowing he noted that a worshipper would have to start from an upright position and that prostration would have to be the end of the act of prayer. With regard to the Hzah prayer, Usmani undertook considerable scrutiny of the contents of those traditions narrating details of Muhammad's (Sallallahu alaihi wa alaihi wasalam) prayer. These are the details which have proved to be the most controversial component of the Hadith literature. In order to rebut the popular base on these controversies, Usmani like Sayid Ahmad Khan implied that the Prophet *was not* suggesting ritual amendments at the details of a particular event.



## 7.2. RECENT TRENDS REGARDING HADITH AMONG 'TRADITIONAL' ULAMA

### 7.2.1. DOWNGRADING 'OBJECTIONABLE' AHADITH AS SHI'AS 'CANNIBALISM'

A concern for non-objectionable narration of the Prophet's personal life and the character of his wives and the Ahl al-Bayt in general and the Companions in particular in recent years precipitated interesting responses from the Aal al-Quran and—more importantly and surprisingly—from some quarters of conservative Ulama. What has driven some of the adherents of these mutually irreconcilable religious dogmas to a point of mutual hostility is the ready-willingness of certain portions of Hadith literature to the alleged underpinning of these objectionable traditions by Shi'ites to malign the reputations of some of the Companions and the wives of the Prophet and thereby undermine the status of Sunnism itself. This is evidenced by some vitriolic anti-Shi'a books which have been written in the past few decades in which the use of Hadith has been selective. One example is that of *Hayat-e-Nabawiyya* (Life) The biography of Noble Prophet written by a Lebanese scholar Abdul-Husayn Muhammad Azam (عبدالحسين محمد عزام) in which Hazrat—the most despised figure among both the Sunnis and the Shi'as for his treacherous role in the tragic killing of Imam Muhammad's grandson Husayn and his family—has been ruled on the basis of certain Ahadith as a *fasiq* (fascist) which are harmful to the community and weaken the reputation of the Muslim world.<sup>1</sup> In Farukh Hashimani wrote an introduction for this book—a controversial book and appreciated the effort of the author in bringing out his historical facts. However in the 1970s Dr. Hashimani had become the president of a Sunni Council which had a narrow sectarian outlook. The Council had been formed in response to the demand placed by the Pakistani government to separate religious institutions for the Sunnis and the Shi'as students.<sup>2</sup> Such decisions were completely in violation of the kind in that of *Ala Huzur Darul-Uloom* (Al-Farooq) founded by another Pakistani scholar, Habib ul-Rahman Khan, in which the author has observed several traditions unanimously agreed upon by both the Sunnis and the Shi'as in the love and reverence for the Prophet's progeny. He used objections to certain those traditions as much as the Prophet is reported to have praised the ethics and contributions of Ali (عليه السلام) personally and son-in-law the fourth—the Rightly Guided Imam—caliph and successor figure in Sunnism—the cause of Imam Ali's subsequent martyrdom for his grand children—Ali and Husayn. All those traditions which carry a

negative light on those opposed to the Prophets family and involved in killing have also been summarily dismissed by Habib-ur-Rahman Kandhalvi.<sup>2</sup> In similar writings—published under the supervision of Mufti Tahir Maqbul—on the 'family of the Prophet', it has been suggested that the Prophets 'real' progeny is from the grandchildren of his other daughter married to the third Muslim Caliph, Uthman. Contrary to what has been described in classical Arab histories and Hadith reports as well, it has been asserted that the Prophets grandchildren from 'Uthman lived a long life and there are countless among the Muslims today who claim their ancestry from them.<sup>3</sup> The distinguishing feature between the *Ahl al-Qur'an* and *Ulama* such as Habib-ur-Rahman Kandhalvi is that the latter's scepticism of Hadith is limited to a certain aspect of Hadith literature and is not accompanied with a corresponding concern for discussing the question of the Prophet's authority in the derivation of religious guidance, or ascertaining its status in relation to the Quran. What sets these *Ulama* apart from the rest is their failure to apply traditional canons of Hadith criticism in purging its vast corpus of presumably objectionable narratives.

It should also be noted that most of these ideas are neither supported by the large majority of the Deobandi *Ulama* nor is Hadith the exclusive factor fuelling sectarian disharmony in the case of Shites and Sunnis.<sup>4</sup> There is considerable acrimony among the Bareilwi, Deobandi and *Ahl-i-Hadith* Sunni groups themselves. They continue to exchange indignant charades of accusations of deviation from the perfect Prophetic mode of human behaviour and religious conduct as cited in the Hadith collections.<sup>5</sup>

### 7.3. CRITICS OF ISNAD PARADIGM AMONG THE PROponents OF HADITH AND CHALLENGES FOR ULAMA

As discussed in this study, it is not that the *Ulama* do not accept the theoretical possibility of any further scrutiny of Hadith literature within the strict parameters of traditional Islamic scholarship. It is just that their utmost reverence for the services of the classical traditionists supersedes that. In practice, nothing worthwhile can be added to the scholarly findings of these 'giants from the distant past' whose piety and scholarship cannot be matched by the present-day *Ulama*. Also, the apprehension of deepening of sectarian schisms precludes them from undertaking such a responsibility. So it effectively suggests that the authentic collections of *Ahadith*—especially the *Sahih* *Series*—are outside the scope of further

rigorous scrutiny and only the books of lesser status can be selectively reviewed. Such an approach, while keeping a cap on the more important and controversial sources of Hadith literature, allows for limited criticism of weaker Ahadith collections on the basis of *timed* and hence helps to keep alive the impression that Hadith criticism is an ongoing, progressive field of enquiry regardless of what the Ahl al-Qur'an and other detractors might suggest.<sup>44</sup> The Ulama miss the point that it is the authentic collections of Ahadith and not the weaker ones that the Ahl al-Qur'an is striving to be restructured within the folds of a more critically analytical framework. The reason for this is that in the opinion of Ahl al-Qur'an scholars, not much work has been done to sift the authentic and fabricated from the text of these authentic traditions and much of it has been accepted uncritically by later-day Muslim scholars and the general Muslim populace.

### 7.3.1. CONTROVERSIES ARISING FROM 'VULGAR' TRADITIONS

In view of some recent developments that have taken place in the discourse on Islamic reform, it appears that it would become increasingly difficult for the Ulama supporting the Ahadith collections uncritically to retain their dogmatic views without, at least some, revision. Most recently the Turkish government's religious ministry has ordered the appointment of a competent board of Ulama to re-evaluate the Hadith literature and focus especially on its objectionable moral and political aspects.<sup>45</sup> In another recent development Kazim Arzu, an European scholar of Hadith studies at the prestigious Al-Azhar University of Cairo, has generated a lot of controversy by issuing a fatwa on the basis of a certain Hadith calling upon working women to breastfeed their male colleagues because that would lead to some kind of filial relationship which would make 'it legal for the woman to sit alone with that man in a closed workplace. This way, the woman can take off her vest in front of her work-mate without being in violation of Islamic rulings'.<sup>46</sup> Traditions like these and others relating to Prophet's marriage with a nine-year-old, and intimate details of his marital life shook the moral sensibilities of large numbers of Muslims and are central to the themes discussed in various western media, television talk shows and Muslim apologetic literature. The key feature of this kind of literature is that the Islam is defended by questioning the historicity of certain traditions rather than revoking the authority of the Prophet altogether or severing linkages to his lineage which exist in the form of Hadith.

### 7.3.2 CHUCKING BETWEEN ISLAMIC PARADIGM AND 'MODERNITY PARADIGM'

As pointed out, for Umma of saving one authentic tradition—no matter what the content of that tradition is and the moral, ethical and political implications it might entail—effectively amounts to admitting lapses in the compilation of Hadith literature and the possibility of revisiting it, at least revision of the entire corpus on the basis of some new criteria which takes into cognizance the realities of modern times. It is because such a prospect not only damages the reputation of those learned scholars who compiled the books of Ahadith and scrupulously questioned their selection criteria but also constrains the spatio-temporal relevance of Divine guidance in the face of *ush-shay' ma'la* by allowing it to be determined and interpreted in consonance with the modernity which for Umma is essentially a Western phenomenon. Thus the Umma perceive that they have a dilemma of choosing between the *Umma* and a so-called modernity paradigm. By preferring to stick to the former which in any changes whatsoever the Umma on the whole gradually heightening their awareness from the burgeoning Muslim middle classes whose religious worldview has invariably been shaped by their own traditions like *awna*, backward and exposure to influences of modernity—and especially to its discourses on human rights, freedom and other related issues—bring about a variety of means, it is because the Umma offering of books, explanations for the controversial aspects of Hadith literature and attempts at contextualizing their histories, social systems and moral values among them. In sum, it is not unexpected if, for *Umma* as with the whole 'specimen' of a apparatus of traditional scholarship of Islamic studies. Rather, such explanations serve to make the acceptance of a certain notion derived from a variety of Islamic sources more conducive on the basis of belief or as a matter of faith and on the pretext that the human intellect is not a subject to form the absolute authority. In the end, it is up to the moral, rational and religious sense of the individual to appropriately prioritize between faith and reason to make modern sensibilities with traditional moral, ethical worldviews. The variety of 'specimens' from Umma are able to utilize a spectrum of printed literature, audio-video lectures and internet discussion forums, even as the individuals are sufficiently empowered available while exercising personal judgment in reaching to matters of religious conviction with favour of their preferred products. On balance, it would an acquiescence to be in sense of what the Umma of use as Western modernity would validate an extended embrace with its

revisionist told all those sources of authority from the past—and not just the ‘embarrassing’ historical narratives and biographical details—which define the Isnad paradigm in the matters of religious beliefs and practices.

### 7.3.3. SHABBOIR AHMAD AZHAR MIRATHI

The ideas of some modern-day critics of Hadith literature needs to be evaluated to appraise the theoretical concerns cited by Ulama. The writings of Shabbir Ahmad Azhar Mirathi and Jawed Ahmad Ghamidi are worth mentioning in this regard.<sup>2</sup> Mirathi is a Deoband trained scholar residing in India who—like Tarmanna Imadi—has exceptional expertise in making an intensive Isnad-based criticism of Hadith literature. His focus has been on the most authentic of all the Hadith collections, i.e. *Sahih Bukhari*. In a comprehensive two-volume critique of *Sahih Bukhari*, Mirathi has focused on the individual narrators of traditions on trace possible forgeries in the narration of traditions. He justifies his revisiting of *Sahih Bukhari*, when other competent Ulama have refrained from doing so, on the pretext that an exaggerated estimate of Bukhari’s work and projection of his image as an almost infallible scholar have prevented a critical study of his work in the past.<sup>3</sup> Shabbir Ahmad Azhar Mirathi does not only highlight what he describes as some obvious shortcomings in scholarship and judgmental errors of the learned traditionist, but also focuses on those flawed aspects of *Sahih Bukhari*’s text which are more obscure and require mastery in traditional Islamic epistemology on Hadith for their exposure. By critiquing *Sahih Bukhari*, Mirathi does in no way revisit the question of the divine status of Hadith or the authority of the Prophet to serve as a religious guide for the Muslims. Hence, he successfully demonstrates how the authority of the past in selective domains can be challenged without necessarily undermining or abolishing it.

### 7.3.4. JAWED AHMAD GHAMIDI

Jawed Ahmad Ghamidi on the other hand, aptly described as a critical traditionalist than an Islamic modernist—is more out of synchrony with the religious ideas of traditional Ulama. Following his mentor Amin Ahsan Isahai, Ghamidi stresses more importance upon the Holy Quran, which is then followed by the Sunnah which he describes as those practices and traditions of the Abrahamic faith which were revived and reformed

by Prophet Muhammad (peace) <sup>10</sup> for the transmission and preservation of this Sunnah among the Muslims, the criteria undertaken were not dissimilar from those with respect to the collection and dissemination of the Quran. But other than the Quran and Sunnah there is no other source of religious guidance that can authoritatively determine the duties of faith and modes of ritual observances. By crediting Abraham as the originator of current ritual practices among the Muslims, Shaheedullah mitigates the importance of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) without intending any insult to his figure. This, coupled with the fact that the *Ar-Risalah* does not comprise the 15 or details about ritual purification and sexual intercourse and nothing significant about punishments or law or principles of state and governance, all seem to constitute a scope for a new jurisprudential codification and legislation.

Thus, it can be said that the views of tradition among the present-day Ulama vary in their approach and intensity of criticism towards the fixed paradigm and the way in which it has allowed the Muslims to be guided by the prophets and a circumstantial compulsion of necessity in an ever-changing world. With respect to the incorporation of Islamic traditions within the ambit of discourse on Islamic reform, such Ulama are likely to differ on the basis of such views. These considerations, in turn, would determine the extent to which the proposals of the proponents of Hadith regarding an absolute or partial severance with the past ensuing from rejecting the fixed paradigm would be fulfilled. Of most interest would be the impact of this discourse on the *Ulema* *Ash-Sha'af'ee* and *Harithi* Ulama. At the moment the impulse for a critical questioning of the fixed paradigm is lacking among the traditional Ulama of these established Muslim groups. The criticisms of individual Ulama, as described in the preceding paragraphs, are an exception.

The discursive space allowing for the revision of respective status and roles of the Prophet, Hadith, Quran and various sources of authority from the past has been constructed and enlarged upon by categorical writings, revisionist historical narratives and polemical disputes amongst reformist *Ulema*. *Ah al-Hijrah* in this case was instrumental in providing an outlet for the Ulama who are the critics of Tradition. It is because such Ulama are perceived as acquainted with the Islamic knowledge system and operating largely within its traditional framework. Also they neither want the general Muslims' emotional affinity with the figure of the Prophet nor propounded ideas widely denoted as common believers' religious worldview. In fact in their critiques of Hadith they do not aim to undermine the role of the Prophet or to question the relevance of Hadith literature but only to

challenge the authenticity of some of its portions—much in the spirit of Sayyid Ahmad Khan's works—which they consider as damaging to the reputation of the Prophet and the religion he preached.

With the further enlargement of the discursive space of the Ahl al-Qur'an as a dissemination of critiques of traditional Ulama about the Isnad paradigm, it is expected that those affected with modern sensibilities—irrespective of their educational background and professional status—will find these ideas increasingly appealing. Also, as some recent trends suggest, a modernistic interpretation of Islam disregarding the Isnad paradigm is again being utilized by the power elites as a mandate for its own role in amending Islamic law. In what ways is this trend an inspiration from the Islamic movement of the early decades of Pakistan's history is a question of specialized research. The most pronounced manifestation of this trend can be seen in the Women Protection Bill passed by the Pakistani parliament in 2006 to make amendments in the Hudood Ordinance (1979). The law was amended in the name of following the true spirit of Islam by opting for an interpretation of Islamic injunctions regarding various sexual malpractices that disregarded the recommendations offered by the Ulama.<sup>32</sup>

Despite all these developments, it seems improbable that the numerical strength of those believing in the ideas espoused by the Ahl al-Qur'an or the likes of a tradition would even remotely come close to that of the Deobandis, Ahl al-Hadith and the Barelwis in the foreseeable future. However, the significance of these ideas within the larger intellectual tradition as a debate on the discourse of Islamic reform will not be dwarfed by the inferiority of the numbers of its adherents. Or, in other words, those consciously identifying themselves as Ahl al-Qur'an may not register a meteoric rise in numbers but the reformist discourse involving disparate currents in Ahl al-Qur'an movements will gain even wider recognition.

## NOTES

1. So far five volumes of Qur'an exegesis have been published by Balagh al-Qur'an. For the sake of the Qur'an, chapters the Qur'anic board continues to submit their findings in the form of journals of the organization. The scholars are to be members associated with Balagh al-Qur'an are no scholars in the strict sense and mostly belong to professional classes who have acquired knowledge of Arabic and Islamic sciences later in their careers. One example is that of Muhammad Tahir Usmani who graduated from a university in Germany and now works as an engineer for a local industry. He is the one responsible for actively looking after the administrative affairs of the journal and the organization.





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- like Mu'awiyah and Yazid and hence are extremely offensive to Shi'a faith, Maududi's feelings were hurt up to a Shi'a condemnation of some of the Prophet's companions and writings. If he made a case for the inclusion of his biography, it was in that both are prominent associates with the formation of Islamic civilisation and not with the rejection or acceptance of certain portions of Hadith literature as such.
16. The fact that Yazid was the grandson of Mu'awiyah is a well-known fact. Mu'awiyah was the first caliph after the Prophet and he was the one who commanded the first invasion and that Husayn accompanied him as his subordinate during the campaign. The veracity of the tradition and the historical evidence supporting Yazid's participation in the invasion of Constantinople is generally considered to be doubtful.
17. *Hayat-e-Sayyidina Imam Karachi* (1979): 5–11. In a separate writing Tameema Imadi expressed similar respect for Yazid by affixing Hazrat to his name—a title which is meant to show respect for a person as a blessed or respectful one. He also held the opinion that Yazid committed a grave error by remaining against the leadership of Ali (Muhammad Qasbi, *Faras-e-Kinashahi*, February 1973: 40). But as already noted in Chapter 5, Tameema Imadi's criticism of pro-Shi'a Ahludith was more within the framework of traditional scholarship on Hadith and involved, mainly, a criticism of the contributions of Shahab Zuhri. As the same chapter has been shown that Tameema Imadi's approach was later followed by Asma Ahsan Ishaq for the similar purpose of condemning Shi'a influences in Sunni writings.
18. Tabi, Muzki, 'Taqdim in *Qasas-e-Hadith* (Lahore: 2005), 6–7.
19. In a separate writing by an Ahl al-Quran scholar Rehmat Ullah Farq, Ali's contributions have been ignored by not including his name in the list of Muslim exegetes of Quran. Farq has included in that list Ali's inner political rival Mu'awiyah but does not mention Ali who is generally considered by the Muslims as the most learned of all the Prophet's Companions. Instead of acknowledging his scholarly credentials, Ali has been condemned by Rehmat Ullah Farq for nominating his own son as a successor to him in a clear convention of the egalitarian spirit upheld by Islam. Farq has also discreetly accused Ali of complicity in the murder of Caliph Usman Farq, *Da'ir-e-Maqam-e-Quran* (Multan, ca. 2000), 61.
20. In a separate writing by Asma Ahsan Ishaq, she has accused Ali of being a hypocrite (Heer) and absolves her of the responsibility for the killing of Prophet's uncle Hamza and the mutilation of his body. Kandhalvi, *Religious Tales, Fairs and Fictions* (Karachi, 1995), 153. Kandhalvi is also critical of those Ahludith which exaggerate the virtues of Companions like Abu Bakr and Umar. But the focus of his extensive critique on Hadith collections is the *Ahl al-Bayt* or Prophet's family. Due to such provocations, this book remains banned in Pakistan.
- Dr Azhar Azhari, *Zuhur-e-Maqam, Quran-e-Talimat aur Uloom-e-Arabi ke Rukhsat men* (Karachi, n.d.), 39–40. Historians like Tabari are condemned for their bias as they have reported that 'Usman's son Abdullah bin Usman from Prophet's daughter Umm Kulthum died at the age of 7. According to Mufri Tahir Muzki, it was a typing error in which 70 was replaced with 7. Interview with Mufri Tahir Muzki, November 2007. Karachi.
22. The works of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi and Habib-ur-Rahman Kandhalvi have been severely criticised in many of the Deobandi journals. Also, an Ahl al-Faith scholar has penned a whole monograph in its rebuttal. Iftikhar-ul-Haq Asari, *Parvaiz-e-Tashreeh ke Jinn Mahasab* (Faisalabad, 2007). A related endeavour is to rebut the allegations against the *Ahl al-Bayt* by Muhammad Ali Nadwi. Interview with Muzki, November 2007. Karachi.

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- 28 Shahbar Ahmad Azhar Mirza. *Sahih Bukhari ke Masa'il: Bukhari ki turth Kamz, Ahadith ki Tafsir wa Tameed* (Lahore, 2005), 383–4.
- 29 Muhammad Khudid Masud. Rethinking sharia: Javed Ahmad Ghamidi on *hukud al-Allah*. *Da'ir al-Islam* 47: 3–4 (November 2007): 356.
- 30 Javed Ahmad Ghamidi. *Umm wa Mubarak* (Lahore, 2006). 'O Arabs were already familiar with the concept of Hajj and Salat so the Prophet's role was limited to reforming the broad aspects of these practices and bring them closer to the original Abrahamic model'. Ibid., 56. As for the Hadith literature, the policy statement of Javed Ahmad Ghamidi's *Ar-Mawrid* Institute states: 'The entire corpus of Hadith literature has been isolated and severed from its roots in the Quran and the Sunna, and the real stress is now laid on the indoctrination of the principles and tenets of a particular sect and on proving its superiority over the others.' [http://www.ar-mawrid.org/pages/about\\_us.php](http://www.ar-mawrid.org/pages/about_us.php). Accessed on 6 May, 2007.
- 31 The Hudood Ordinance was enforced in Pakistan by the military regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. It prescribed Islamic punishments for such offences as adultery, fornication and theft, which have explicitly been described in the text of the Quran. The provisions of this Ordinance were discriminatory to women. The women rights groups and the critics of this law argued that in case a rape victim was unable to prove the charges with the testimony of four pious male witnesses, she was to be punished for fornication or adultery.
- 32 Zahid-ur-Rashidi, one of the scholars consulted for changes in the Hudood Ordinance in 2006, has explained the un-Islamic provisions of the latest changes in the Hudood Ordinance. In his various writings, regarding various provisions of the amended Hudood laws published in various Urdu newspapers, Rashidi had argued that the rape victim shall be provided justice under the criminal law in case the condition of four pious male witnesses for punishment required under the Hudood Law cannot be met. But the same has not been done for cases of fornication or adultery in the new Hudood Ordinance. In fact, it has been made increasingly difficult to register a case under the new Hudood Ordinance to register cases for these offences.

## Glossary

<i>Bid'at</i>	Rituals and beliefs which are considered by the Ulama to be later-day accretions to the 'original' body of Islamic doctrines and practices.
<i>Darurat</i>	Critical evaluation of a Hadith on the basis of its content instead of chains of transmission, i.e. <i>content-based criticism</i> (for details cf. Appendix I).
<b>Fatwa</b>	religio-juristic ruling on some aspect of Islamic law.
<b>Fiqh</b>	the 'science' of Islamic jurisprudence in the light of which Shari'at is to be derived and understood.
<i>ghayr muqallid</i>	One who does not follow any of the four formal Schools of Islamic Shari'at, and rather draws guidance directly from the Holy Quran and Sunnat.
Hadith (pl: Ahadith)	Words and deeds transmitted on the authority of the Prophet which convey details about the actions he performed, approved, disapproved or condoned, along with his statements and sayings on various occasions in response to different situations. A complete Hadith consists of a <i>matn</i> (text), and <i>isnad</i> (information about its chain of transmitters).
<b>Ijma</b>	Consensus of the Muslim community or scholars of Islam on some aspect of Shari'at.
<b>Ijtihad</b>	Individual reasoning on a point of law or legal issue on which there is no clear guidance in the Holy Quran, Hadith or Sunnat.
<i>isnad</i>	Chain of transmitters of a Hadith.
<b>Ka'ba</b>	House of God' built by Abraham and Ishmael. It is located in Mecca. Muslims face the Ka'ba while offering their daily prayers and circumambulate around it while performing pilgrimage.
<b>Madaris</b>	seminaries where education is imparted in the field of Islamic sciences.
<i>matn</i>	Text of a Hadith.
<i>Mazahib</i>	The four legal schools in Sunni Islam, i.e. Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali. They are named after their respective founding figures.
<i>Muzahib</i>	see <i>Mazahib</i> .
<b>Muhaddith</b>	Scholar of Hadith.
(P. Muhaddithun)	

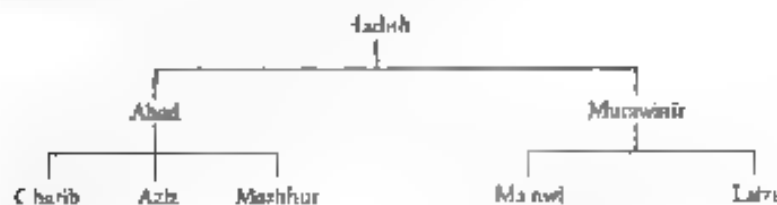
Mujtahid	learned enquirers who have the scholarly credentials to carry out Ijtihad.
Munkir-i-Hadith (sing. Munkir-ul-Hadith)	Those who deny, question or seek revision, to varying degrees of extremity, of the authority, authenticity and relevance of the Hadith literature as a source of guidance for Muslim beliefs and practices.
Muqallid	One who follows the principles of Shari'at laid down by any of the four established Schools of Sunni Islam. This concept of adhering strictly to a particular School is referred to as <i>taqlid</i> .
Namaz	a Persian loan-word for <i>Salat</i> —ritual act of worship required to be performed by Muslims five times a day.
Naskh	A term used in literature on Quranic exegesis which means 'abrogation' [of Quranic verses]. According to Quranic scholars, in some cases the abrogated verses ( <i>mansukh</i> ) were replaced by another verse ( <i>naskh</i> ) while in other cases no replacements were made.
Qazi	spiritual guide.
Qazi	Judges appointed in the courts to administer justice on the basis of Shari'at.
Rak'at	A unit in the canonized prayer denoting the order for the performance of various postures and recitation of salutations and supplications. Each of the five daily prayers have different number of <i>rak'ats</i> to be performed.
Sihah Sitta	Six collections of Ahadith considered as the most 'authentic' by Sunni scholars of Islam (For details, cf. Appendix D).
Sirat	Literature dealing with the biography of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).
Shari'at	The body of rules guiding the Muslims in every aspect of life including law, ethics, and etiquette. Its four major sources include the Quran, Hadith, Ijma (consensus of the community) and Qiyas (analogical reasoning).
Sunnat	Normative mode of action associated with Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) which is considered as exemplary and binding for the Muslims to follow. Hadith refers to the statements of the Prophet and the Sunnat refers to the actions that he performed.
Sunnat-ul-Muwa'at	Traditions or Sunnat of the Prophet (especially those associated with the performance of Namaz) that have been followed in practice for centuries by such a large

segment of the Muslim population that they cannot qualify to be unauthentic. This concept is used by some of the scholars to deny the utility of Hadith as the source of Muslim practices for various acts of worship.

Tafsir	Commentary or exegesis of Quran
Taqiyya	See Muqallid
Tariqat	Mystic path
Ulama (sing: <i>Alim</i> )	Scholars learned in Islamic legal and religious studies. The title attached to their names is mostly that of Maulana or Maulwi.
Urs	Commemorating death anniversary of a Sufi signifying his communion with God.
Wahi	Divine revelation. Two 'types' of Wahi are generally referred to: <i>wahi matli</i> is the recorded revelation in the form of Quran and is recited during the prayers; <i>wahi ghayr matli</i> or 'un-recorded revelation' comprises of Hadith and Sunnat.

## Appendix I: Categories of Hadith

**Figure 1 (a) Categories of Hadith on the basis of the number of its transmitters**



### **1. MUTAWWĪṬ (CONSECUTIVE)**

A hadith that has been reported by such a large number of reporters at every level of transmission that it excludes the possibility of forgery or falsehood. There are disagreements between the traditionists on fixing the minimum number of reporters required for a Hadith to be termed as *mutawwīṭ*. The numbers vary from 5, 12 and 20 to even 313—each number being justified by a Quranic verse or on the basis of some religious account. One of the best known of *mutawwīṭ* Hadith is reported by seventy-two Companions and quotes the Prophet as saying that whosoever attributes a false statement to him, makes his abode in Hell.

#### **(i) Laḥz (verbatim transmission)**

A Hadith which is reported in exactly the same words as Prophet had uttered them. Only a handful of traditions qualify the criteria of being widely reported and sharing the same text. Quran—although entirely different as a scripture from Hadith collection—in a way presents an example of verbatim transmission. It was recited by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to his Companions and transmitted by innumerable reporters—both at the level of Companions and followers—over a long period of time in exactly the same words.

#### **(ii) Ma'nwi (conspicuous transmission of the meaning alone)**

It does not convey the Hadith in exactly the same words but only the *sense* or what had been said or done by the Prophet. Since this type of Hadith too, is widely reported, its issue is not questioned but its relevance in determining legal and religious commandments is open to debate.



**3. *Ahad* (SINGLE)**

It simply refers to a Hadith which is not reported by enough number of transmitters to reach the level of *mutawatir*. Opinions differ with regard to usage and utility of *ahad* traditions as valid sources for law and practice. Caliph 'Umar usually asked for two witnesses before accepting an *ahad* tradition. Imam Shafi'i followed by Ahmad bin Hanbal—was the first to assert its authority as valid for the purposes of law making and determining the practice of Prophet Muhammad (peace). Abu Hanufa finds it only conjecturally useful and accepts it sparingly. Malik preferred *Qiyas* over *ahad* traditions not backed by the practices of the Companions and the Followers.

**(i) *Mashhur* (famous)**

It is reported by three to four narrators at every level of its transmission but falls short of fulfilling the criteria for *mutawatir*.

**(ii) *Achik* (rare)**

A tradition whose narrators are not *mutawatir* at every level of transmission. Their number may exceed at particular levels<sup>16</sup> but at no level should they be less than two.

**(iii) *Gharib* (strange)**

A Hadith that has been narrated by a single reporter at any one or all levels of transmission. Even if at any level of transmission the number of reporters exceed by one, the tradition remains *gharib*.

## Appendix II: Sihah Satta (Six Authentic Collections of Ahadith)<sup>1</sup>

### **The *Sahih* of Bukhari**

Muhammad bin Abdullah al-Bukhari (d. 870) started his Hadith lessons at the age of eleven. What prompted him to undertake the task of compiling an authentic version of Prophet's sayings was a vision he had in which he was flying flies away from the Prophet.

He is reported to have learned Hadith from more than a thousand scholars. For this purpose, he travelled extensively to Balkh, Samarkand, Nisapur, Baghdad, Basra, Kufa, Mecca, Medina, Asqalan, Damascus and Egypt. His *musnidjah* continued for some four decades.

The *Sahih* was compiled by him over a period of sixteen years during which he sifted through 600,000 traditions. He has stated that he has composed his work thrice. In addition to the traditionally held criteria for ascertaining the soundness of a tradition, Bukhari also emphasized the point that there should be ample evidence to show the narrator had had the opportunity of personally seeing his predecessor from whom he is relating the tradition. The whole book was compiled in the Holy Mosque of Medina and during the process Imam Bukhari would often say: *Allahumma inni ʿalayka muallim* (invoke Divine guidance for ascertaining the soundness of the traditions).

The number of Ahadith in his collection, excluding those without complete *isnad*, are 7391 of which about 9000 are repetitions. His purpose in repeating Ahadith and placing them under different chapters is to bring to light further evidence on the authenticity of Hadith in question and to draw more than one practical conclusion from them.

Al-Daraqutni (d. 975) has attempted to prove the weakness of some 20 traditions to be found in *Sahih* Bukhari. Reservations are also displayed over some 81 narrators that have found place in the traditions compiled by him. The entire set shows that these traditions may not be wholly correct but are not in strict conformity with the criteria laid down by Bukhari.

### **The *Sahih* of Muslim**

Muslim bin al-Hajjaj (d. 875) collection of Ahadith was compiled from 40,000 traditions over a period of almost fifteen years. It is a very desire to make the

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the information for this section has been taken, among other works, from A. P. Fakhro, I. M. Johnstone, R. B. Serjeant, and G. R. Smith (eds.), *Arabic Literature in the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge, 1983).

of Muslim because the compiler has brought one particular Hadith under a single category along with all the different chains of transmission by which it has been reported. He takes pains to mention any change in text or disagreement about the quality of any narrator in the chain, even if such difference is slight and does not have a noticeable bearing on the overall meaning and relevance of that Hadith.

It contains some 12,000 Ahadith including 4000 repetitions. Muslim and Bukhari are collectively referred to as *al-Shaykhayn* that is two leading authorities on Hadith. The number of traditions that are common to both Bukhari and Muslim number 2326 and are considered to be worthy of most respect.

#### **The *Sunan* of Nasa'i**

Nasa'i (d. 915) work contains over 5000 traditions which are divided into sub-chapters and arranged in the familiar legal order. He is generally placed next to Bukhari and Muslim in the hierarchy of authentic Hadith works or his strict rules regarding the acceptance of Hadith.

Like other Hadith scholars, Nasa'i undertook journeys or *rehlahs* to learn Ahadith of the Prophet. He started travelling for this purpose from the young age of fifteen and went to Khurasan, Iraq, Arabia, Syria and Egypt among other places.

#### **The *Sunan* of Abu Da'ud**

Among *Sihab Satta*, Abu Da'ud's (d. 888) collection has the maximum number of traditions dealing with Fiqh. He has selected 4800 traditions from 500,000 traditions known to him. Though it contains many weak Ahadith as well but then, in those cases, their quality is indicated by the author himself.

#### **The *Jami* of Tirmizi**

Tirmizi (d. 892) was a student of Imam Bukhari and Muslim along with some other reputed scholars of Hadith sciences. The quality of the training he received is reflected in his work as well. His collection is properly arranged and no traditions are repeated. He also notes the opinion of the narrators as well which serves to bolster the importance of his work for future readings as he holds that traditions dealing with legal, dogmatic and historical aspects, have generally been accepted by the rulers of the main juridical tendencies as the basis of the Islamic law. Moreover, Tirmizi significantly contributed to *fiqh* sciences by discussing the relative status of the narrators in the form of analytical remarks on the degree of authenticity of a Hadith.

#### **The *Sunan* of Ibn Majah**

The *Sunan* (d. 886) work was included among *Sihab Satta* in the fifteenth century by Muhammad bin Tahir al-Maqdisi because it contains many such traditions that are not to be found in any other book of *Sihab Satta*, however a lower status

than the rest because there are to be found in this collection weak traditions along with  *sahih* and  *hasan* ones. There is disagreement among the scholars on the number of  *weak* traditions in this collection. Ibn Jarir puts the total at thirteen four.

In all this work contains 4341 Ahadith of which 3002 exist in other five collections as well and for the rest the general rule is not to accept these traditions without proper scrutiny.

## NOTES

1. There are hundreds of different types of Hadith sciences with each of its branch a separate science in itself. The appendix offers only basic information about preliminary aspects of Hadith sciences, relevant to the present study. Sources: Muhammad Zubair Siddiqi, *Hadith Literature: Its Origin, Development and Special Features* (Lahore, 2001); Dr Suhayl Hasan *Al-Jam' Ishtihazi-Hadith* (Islamabad, 2003).

## Appendix III: Images

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
 از فتیله ای از عبادت بطریق جمیع فی الزمان و فی دین الخ  
 مولوی امیر خسرو خان اسلام علیکم و آله و سلم و برادر  
 خطوط پکی سبب پویش حکمی عین بسید علی اگر عید خطوط  
 او بر خط دست می نگرد ای سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 کافیه بیاعت مرصع سالی و غیر مرصع سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 عین خواه در سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 کذری سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 معارف سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 و کلام سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 و الله یحب الخیرین کی تعلیم مسائل کرنا معنی نام یق  
 معنی و تعریف لفظ الله - بلیان نامیه - نکره - فتوح قاهرین  
 و کلام سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی  
 مرآت شمس مستعمل سوچناهی - فتوح تحقیق و تفتیش  
 و کلام سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی سالی

Image III. a - Maulwi Abdullah Chagranaw's letter to Maulwi Adah Yar Khan  
 24 Rajab 1303 AH (29 April 1886) Courtesy of Hammat Ratiq Asari



image III (b) Waqfnama (March 1905)  
in favour of Anjuman Ah. al-Qur'an  
ahore to serve as the custodian of  
Chunhyar Wahi mosque  
(Courtesy: Dr Saadia Sukha Ullah)



Image III (c), Khwaja Ahmad-ud-Din  
Arif (1861–1946)  
Courtesy: Dr Sakha Sakha Ullah





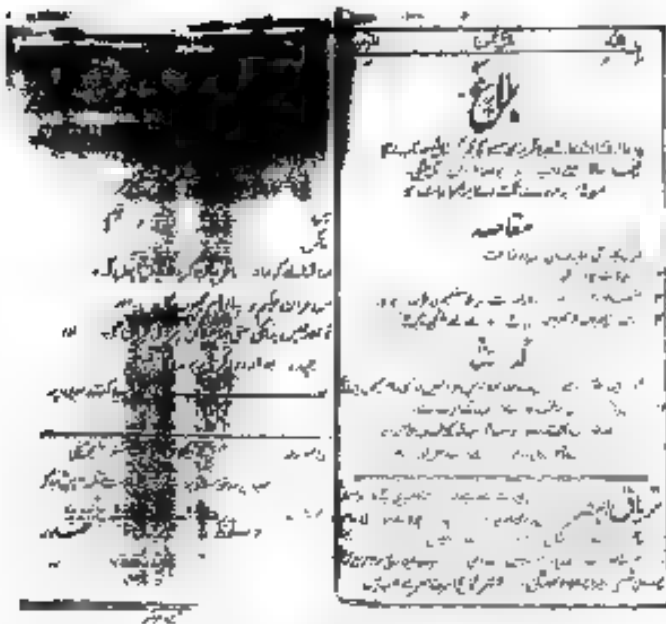


Image III c). Title page of *Bayaḡ* (Amriyār) and membership form of Umar Muslima



Image II f) Ghaz Mennad  
(Dharampal et al. 1960)  
'Courtesy' Arshad Chaudhry,  
Faisalabad)



Image III (g). Aslam Jeyrapuri,  
1881–1955) (Courtesy Idara  
Tulu al-Islam



Image III (h). Ghulam Ahmad  
Parwez (1903–1985)  
(Courtesy Idara Tulu al-Islam,

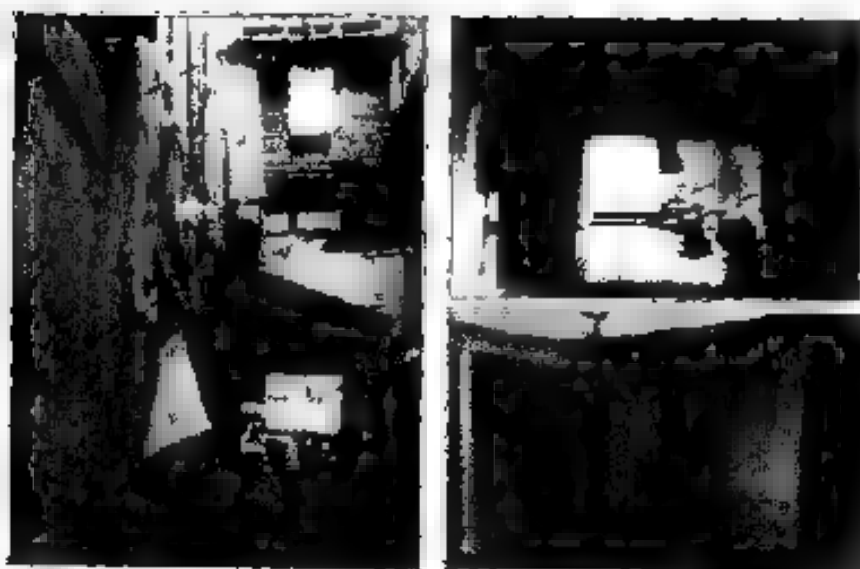


Image III - the Abul-Quran mosque, Sultan Wala Bazar, Lahore  
March 2006 Photograph by author

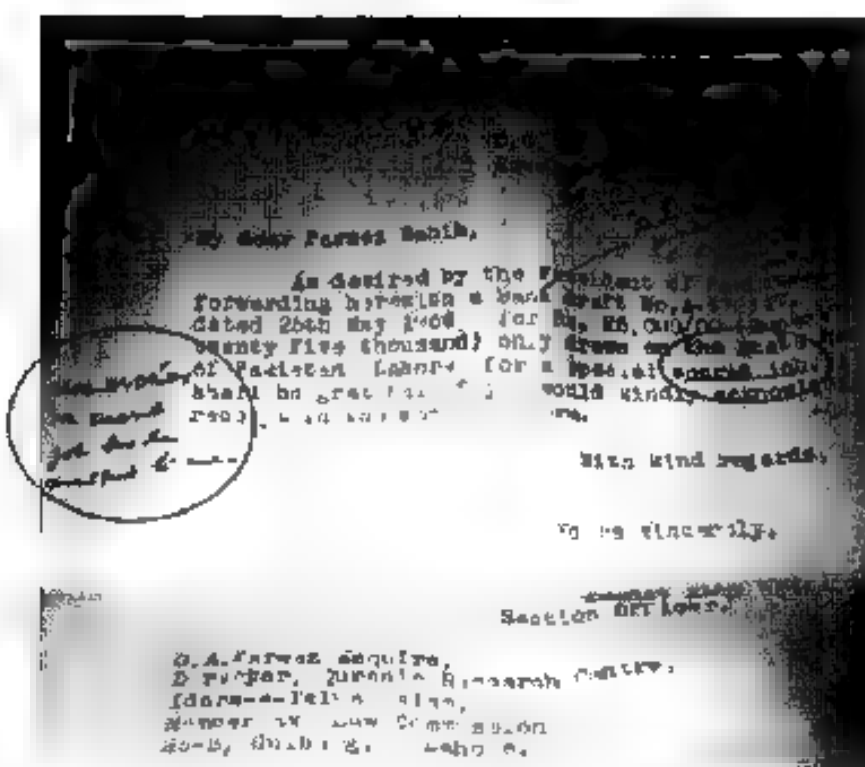


Image II Letter from the Presidency to Ghulam Ahmad Farooz indicating financial support worth Rs 25,000 for some 'Secret Mission'. On the margins of the letter Farooz wrote a comment that no 'Secret Mission' had been assigned to him by Ayub Khan (May 1964). Source: Ghulam Ahmad Farooz Private Papers, Kara Tulla-Islami.

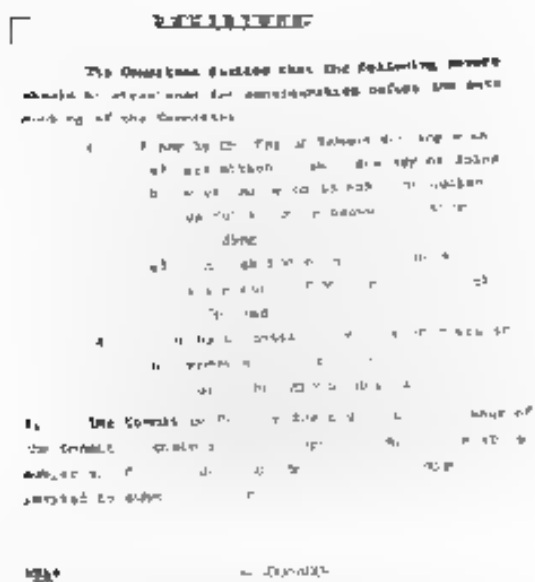


Image 1.1 (k). "The Fundamental Conflict Project, 1967" (Source: Ghulam Ahmad Parwez Private Papers, Idara Tulu'-l-Islam,

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*Al-Bayan* (Amritsar, Lahore)

*Al-Furqan* (Bareilly)

*Al-Murshid* (Ludhiana)

*Belagh* (Amritsar)

*Belagh-ul-Quran* (Gujranwala, Lahore)

*Bayyinat* (Karachi)

*Bayan* (Karachi)

*Bayan-ul-Uloom* (Rawalpindi)

*Ek-e-Nazar* (Islamabad)

*Hamij* (Ludhiana)

*Isha'at-ul-Sunnat* (Lahore)

*Isha'at-ul-Quran* (Lahore)

*Ishraq* (Lahore)

*Jam'ia* (Delhi)

*Jarida* (Karachi)

*Mu'arif* (Amritsar)

*Mushadid* (Lahore)

*Niqaba* (Lahore)

*Rauq* (Lahore)

*Sahifa Ahl-i-Hadith* (Karachi)

*Saqafat* (Lahore)

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